

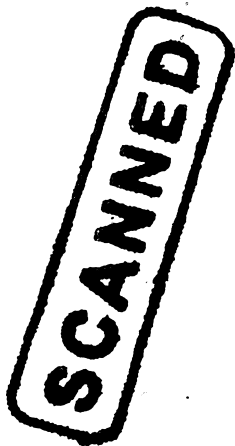
F. DUBKOVETSKY

ADVANCING
ADVANCING

TO COMMUNISM
TO COMMUNISM

The story of one of the oldest and best collective farms in the Ukraine—the *Gains of October* Kolkhoz, founded in 1922 in Talny District, Kiev Region—this book will give the reader an idea of the deep-going changes which have taken place in the countryside during the Soviet years. It shows the leading and directing role of the Party of Lenin and Stalin in building up the collective-farm system. Collective farming has altered not only the appearance of the countryside but also the nature of the peasant's labour and his very psychology. Together with collective farming, a new life, a life of culture, has come to the village. Libraries, cultural clubs, electricity, the radio—all these have become part and parcel of kolkhoz life, as the differences between town and country are being eliminated.

Fyodor Dubkovetsky, the author, is not a professional writer. He is a collective farmer, and he writes here about his own life and work and that of his fellow villagers—men and women of the socialist farm fields.





SKETCHES
of
SOVIET LIFE

FREE



FYODOR DUBKOVETSKY

FYODOR DUBKOVETSKY

ADVANCING
to
COMMUNISM

NOTES OF A PIONEER
OF COLLECTIVE FARMING
IN THE UKRAINE

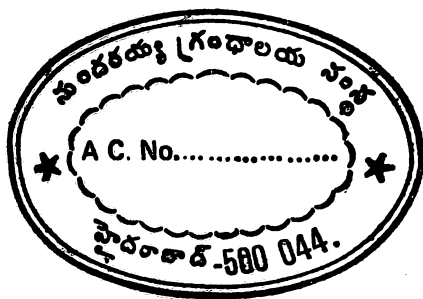


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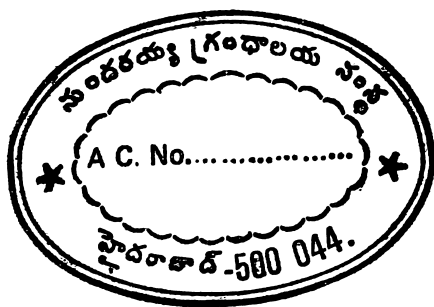
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WHERE THE GORNY TIKICH FLOWS

It was in the autumn of 1921. I had just received my discharge from the Red Army and was tramping along the road that led to Talnoye, a little place not far from Uman in the Kiev country.

The road ran amid level fields for the most part, but there were gullies and little copses every once in a while, and orange-gold leaves rustled underfoot. In the fields, crisscrossed with balks, people were winding up the year's work. Occasionally you came across a good team of horses, but mostly it was wasted nags you saw, barely able to drag the small, light ploughs.

Some folk were ploughing for next spring, others still for the winter crops. A few were putting in the seed.

One of these was quite close to me. Seed bag slung over his shoulder, he strode along, scattering the seed in the new-ploughed furrows. The black clods gleamed in the sun. And I recalled the old song:

*All around the fields roll wide,
Stretching far on every side,
Yet I look at them and mourn:
Wide the fields, but poor the corn.*

As I looked at that peasant, I was thinking: Here he is planting his little strip, in a week's time a few shoots will push up and strain towards the bleak autumn sun. Next year they will bring him a hard-earned crust of bread.

Or maybe they won't, if there's a drought like last year. They talk of good Mother Earth; but it can be a wicked stepmother too. Other folks' winter corn is green already, and he's only doing his planting.

The road climbed up a slope, and a deep and narrow valley lay beyond, with a stream winding along the bottom.

The Gorny Tikich. Narrow, but deep and rapid, it swirled and foamed angrily between its stony banks. I thought of my boyhood days and of how I used to dam up brooklets after the rain and put up make-believe water mills on them.

If we could harness the Tikich, now! To think of all that power going to waste! Why, you could do wonders if you set it to work!

My mind went back to our send-off from the army, and what the Commissar had said to us: "You are being demobilized, comrades, you're

returning to the labours of peace. Our young Soviet republic expects much of you. You have smashed Denikin and Wrangel and Petlyura, have beaten off the intervention of the world bourgeoisie. Now it's up to you to repair the destruction, to rebuild the factories and mills, to show how you can run our liberated land. . . ."

Here was Talnoye. One street, another, then the alleyway. Everything so familiar, so well-remembered. And there, at last, was the house that I called home.

A young woman with a dark shawl over her shoulders was standing at the gate. She darted forward when she saw me.

"Fyodor! Darling! . . ."

"It's me right enough, Dusya. . . . Come, what are you crying for?"

"It's just because I'm so happy. . . . I was afraid you wouldn't come back."

I put my arms around her and said, looking down into her eyes:

"Little silly! Where else would I go?"

DAYS LONG PAST

I was born in 1894 beyond the Dniester, in the village of Zarozhany, Khotin County, in what was then the province of Bessarabia.

My father had a large family, and only some three hectares of land [$7\frac{1}{2}$ acres].

We used to have a horse, but the children needed milk, so father sold the horse and bought a cow. We had to hire horses from the kulaks, and make payment in work.

In the winter I went to school, and in the summer I would work with my mother and sister on the beet plantation on the manor estate. It was a hard job. Adults were paid as little as 25 kopeks a day there, we youngsters 15. To get 25, I would stand on a stone behind my mother and sister when the jobs were being handed out, so as to seem taller.

In 1907, there was a strike on the estate, or a "riot," as they called it. The labourers refused to work for the miserable wages they were getting, and demanded higher pay. Armed police were brought over from Khotin. They jailed the strike leaders, laid about them with their knouts, and threatened that anybody who would not work on the old terms would pay dear for it. In the end the labourers had to give in.

Soon after, something happened that made me give up school.

I was a good and eager pupil, but when we started doing fractions in the fourth class, I simply could not get the hang of them; maybe the teacher did not explain them properly, or maybe there was some other reason—I really can't say. The teacher called me a dolt and other such names, then one day he grabbed hold of my

head and started knocking it against the black-board.

I was so terrified that I stopped going to school and for several days roamed about the village back yards until the classes were over. Then father found out and gave me a leathering. But he did not insist on my keeping up school: he fell ill about this time and I had to help mother work our bit of land. Soon father took to his bed altogether.

I hired out as teamster on the manor estate. I carted manure, harrowed and ploughed. The work was hard, but I did manage to cope with it. Then one day they gave me someone else's span of oxen to drive. These oxen were old, lazy and unmanageable. Try as I would, I could not get them harnessed and on the way: they just stood there and wouldn't budge.

The other drivers were already off, and I was still struggling with those oxen. The bailiff saw and gave me a taste of his whip. Hating him and everything on the estate, I did not return after that day, but went to work in a sugar refinery. There they put me on unloading lime. This was a very arduous job: the lime dust got into your lungs and choked you. But the pay was better than on the estate, and you could drink all the sugared water you wanted.

When the refining season ended, I helped with overhauling the machinery, in which I developed a great interest.

The autumn and winter passed that way. With the fifty rubles I had earned, I returned home. Mother sold the cow and, adding the proceeds to the money I had, bought a couple of mares instead. Father was still bedridden and I became head of the family.

In 1914, father died, and the war with Germany and Austria-Hungary started soon after. People who know me now would not believe how skinny I was at twenty—a regular skeleton. On two separate occasions, the recruiting authorities rejected me. But the war went on and on, and I did get drafted in the end. With a lot of others, I was marched to Khotin and assigned to the infantry.

Here I had a bit of luck. One day I saw a little knot of recruits clustered around a corporal and discovered that he wanted volunteers for the air service. This was wonderful. I was tremendously keen to be in some engineering unit, where they had machinery. And here was a chance to get into the air service!

"I want to be an airman, Mister Corporal," I called out.

I don't know why, but he listened to me.

"Had any schooling?" he wanted to know.

"Four years," I lied boldly; then I began to worry—suppose he asked me fractions?

He didn't ask anything else, however, but picked out a dozen of us who had been to school

and took us to Zhmerinka, where the 6th air service depot was stationed. After six months of drilling, I was detailed to an aircraft workshop. The machinery fascinated me, I did well and was sent to a school for aircraft mechanics.

This was real happiness. There was just one thing I was afraid of as I took my seat in the classroom: that was fractions. To my surprise, however, I now found them quite easy—I could scarcely believe it myself.

I completed the course with "Excellent" marks in all seventeen subjects and duly received my ground mechanic's certificate. In fact, thanks to my good study record, I was appointed after a time to be instructor in the workshops.

When the Great October Revolution came, the men in our shops marched in the revolutionary demonstrations and joyfully acclaimed the new life. Afterwards we defended the depot, arms in hand, when the counterrevolutionary bandits of the Ukrainian nationalist Petlyura tried to seize it.

By this time the troops on the Southwestern Front were "voting with their feet" against the war, that is, making tracks for home. I "voted" that way too. A Revolutionary Committee was formed in our village, and soldiers back from the front divided up the landlord's estate among the villagers.

But then black days set in again. First the Germans, and then the Rumanian boyards, seized our green Bessarabia.

At the end of November 1918, the Rumanian army occupied northern Bessarabia, of which Khotin County was part. A vicious reign of terror set in. The occupiers looted our peasants and townsfolk, and the least resistance was punished by torture and shooting.

In January 1919 a revolt broke out in our county, and on January 10 the Rumanians were driven out of it. General Poetasu of the Rumanian army was killed in this fighting, and some of the Rumanian units sided with the insurgents.

Our village was well to the fore in the revolt. When the occupiers entered it, my fellow soldiers said indignantly:

"Are we going to put up with these? Just you look what kind of an army they are: oxen dragging their guns, their soldiers wearing bast shoes! Why, we can make hash of them with just our scythes and hatchets!"

And before long we rose against the invaders. I commanded a platoon. We had a machine gun, and every man was armed with a rifle and hand grenades.

The insurgents fought with real heroism. But with the Petlyura counterrevolutionaries helping, the Rumanian army in the end crushed the Khotin revolt. This was on January 21. There was a

blood bath that lasted for several weeks after. In Khotin alone, 500 people were shot in the market place, and at Novoselitsa station a punitive expedition shot down 165 railwaymen. Altogether, over 11,000 people were butchered. More than 50,000 fled across the Dniester; the battalion of insurgents to which I belonged crossed the river too.

And my native region was to remain until 1940 under the Rumanian boyards' heel.

"LET'S CLAIM THE EARTH HENCEFORTH..."

Our battalion halted in the little town of Dunayevtsy, in the province of Kamenets-Podolsk. Here Petlyurovites were in possession. They urged us to join them and promised to drive the Rumanians out of Khotin.

But we knew how much their lying promises were worth. It was they that had helped the Rumanian invaders to smash our revolt!

Thereupon the two Petlyurovite battalions closed in on us, herded us into the fire station and posted a guard outside. But during the night we killed off the guards and got away. With some others from Zarozhany, I pushed further on to the east. In Mogilev-Podolsk we came on some Red Army regulars—the 1st Bessarabian Regiment—and from then on, I and many of my

fellows fought in the Red Army right up to the end of the Civil War. At first I was in the infantry, then in the gunners—the 135th Artillery Group.

I remember how we loved to sing the *Internationale*, particularly the lines: "Let's claim the earth henceforth as brothers, drive the indolent from the soil." We believed in the triumph of our righteous, sacred cause, believed that soon we would own the earth and wipe out the indolent, the parasites.

The 1st Bessarabian Regiment and 135th Artillery Group did good work against the counter-revolutionary bands of Petlyura, Grigoryev, Tyutyunnik, Makhno and Marusya, and also against the Polish Whites. But to tell about all this fighting would take a whole book.

Then the war ended. My unit was quartered in Talnoye at the time. People talked of demobilization, and I started thinking: where was I, a homeless Bessarabian, to lay my head? My native parts were under the invader's jackboot. True, I had a new homeland—the Soviet Ukraine—but I was a stranger there, I did not know anybody....

One evening in January 1921 I went down to the Talnoye clubhouse; they were going to have some sort of a show there. Many girls used to come to the club. But most of them wouldn't have anything to do with the likes of us. We were not

eligible suitors, they figured—here today and gone tomorrow.

All the same, I ventured to go up to one of them. She seemed about seventeen, and I liked the looks of her from the first. You could tell right away that she came of poor parents: she was plainly dressed and was modest and unassuming, different from the rich girls, with their airs and affectations.

I spoke to her and asked what her name was.

"Dusya," she said, blushing, and I thought she looked even prettier that way.

"Mine's Fyodor," I said. "So now we're acquainted."

I bought tickets and we went in.

That was Yevdokiya Nikolayevna Chuban, who was to become my wife. We got married a few months later.

Then our group was moved from Talnoye to Skvira. I had to leave my young wife. There were tears, of course. "That's the last you've seen of your Fyodor," her girl friends laughed. "He'll never come back." But I did come back after I got my discharge. I had nothing and neither had my wife. We stayed with her parents and hired out to the kulaks for living.

In the spring of 1922, I got an allotment of three hectares out of what had been the local landlord's estate. My father-in-law received more land too. We had land enough now, but that was

all we did have. What were we going to work it with? And what about seed for planting? For all the use we could make of our plots, we might almost turn them over to some kulak for a share of the crop.

I tried to get seed from the kulak Albert, at whose oil press I had been working.

"Suppose you pay me in grain instead of money?" I asked. "I've got no seed for my land."

His reply was to point to some weeds:

"You can take those and plant them. . . ."

It was the local Committee of Poor Peasants (CPP) that helped me. These committees carried on a struggle against the kulaks and gave material assistance to the neediest. It was they that directed the activities of the Peasant Mutual Assistance Groups.

In the summer of 1922 I was elected chairman of the sectional CPP. The more militant spirits began to gather around me. Prominent among them were a fellow Bessarabian, Onisim Rozhko, who had stayed on in Talnoye too, and Nikita Konfedrat, formerly a labourer on the estate of Count Shuvalov. Konfedrat and I became close friends afterwards, and such we are to this day.

I recall how we first got acquainted. I was putting up a barn for Albert at the time. Konfedrat, passing by, stopped and watched me for a while, then said:

"You certainly are a clever workman, mate."

And it was true, I was a good hand at carpentering—I had learnt it from my father. I could put up a house, knock a tub together, make a door or a window frame.

“Always working for other people—what about yourself?” Konfedrat went on. “When are you going to put up a house for yourself to live in?”

My father-in-law had also alluded to the subject several times. After all, we couldn’t go on living with him forever.

I dropped my axe, squatted down and replied:

“I’m not thinking about a home for myself. I’ve no use for one now.”

“What do you mean, ‘you’ve no use for one’?” Konfedrat demanded in surprise; he was homeless too, and had to rent quarters.

“Just what I say. I’m thinking about something else—about a common homestead, on common land.”

This was something I had been thinking about ever since the army, and now it was my one idea.

I had read in newspapers and pamphlets about agricultural collectives—artels and communes. But I only had a vague notion of what they should be like. All I knew was that the Communist Party and Lenin himself proposed these forms of farming.

After I became head of the Committee of Poor Peasants, I confided my ideas to its militants. It

turned out that Konfedrat and Vlas Panchenko, a demobilized Red Army man who was chairman of the village CPP, had been thinking about the same thing.

We often got together and eagerly discussed plans of collective life and work. Every one of us realized that life couldn't go on in the old way any longer.

"Here I've been given land," Konfedrat would say. "I'm rich in land now. But when you come to look at it, I'm a poor man still. How am I to work my land? I've got to have a plough, a seeder, a cultivator of some sort. And where am I to get the money for it all?"

Recalling those days now, one can't help marvelling at the genius and vision of our great Lenin. It was just as if he had overheard our conversations, had read our thoughts.

There was no escape from poverty for the small farm, Lenin wrote. "If we continue as of old on small farms, even as free citizens on free land, we shall still be faced with inevitable ruin."

I don't remember just which speech or article of Lenin's we read one day in the newspaper *Bednota* (*The Poor Peasant*). I only know that it finally confirmed us in our ideas. We decided to call a general meeting of the poor peasants, timing it to take place on the fifth anniversary of the Revolution, and there raise the question of forming an agricultural collective.

On November 7, 1917, the land became ours. On November 7, 1922, we decided to start working it in a new way. The meeting opened with the singing of the *Internationale*. And I could feel the deep emotion with which we all sang the rousing words:

*We peasants, artisans and others
Enrolled among the sons of toil,
Let's claim the earth henceforth as
brothers,
Drive the indolent from the soil.*

"HIVE AND BEE"

Our hopes came true. The general meeting of the poor voted to set up an agricultural artel in Talnoye. A group of the leading spirits was appointed to draft the Rules. It consisted, besides myself, of Nikita Konfedrat, Onisim Rozhko, Panfil Yakovenko, Ivan Pikula, and Vlas Panchenko.

We met in a few days' time at the headquarters of the sectional CPP. I brought out the Model Rules of the Agricultural Artel that I had been given at the Uman County Land Board. We all sat around the table, and I read the Rules aloud, putting in as I went the names of the initiators, the location of the artel, the dates, and so on.

The Rules differed a good deal from those we have nowadays. They did not say how the work

in the collective was to be organized, how the proceeds were to be distributed, how much land and livestock the members might have on their own.

But they said the main thing—they laid down the socialist principles on which the artel should be built: working in common, on common land, rendering the peasant's work more productive by new forms of cultivation, delivering the members from poverty and bringing them prosperity and culture.

One point that still had to be settled was the name of our artel. We wanted it to express our aspirations, to symbolize the collective way of life on which we were embarking. "The Dawn," "Forward," and other names were suggested. But I had thought of something else, and I asked:

"What is the cleanest and most industrious creature, the best team worker in the world?"

"The bee," somebody answered.

"And where does it live?"

"In the hive."

"Well, then, let's call ourselves *Hive and Bee*. From now on we must be industrious and team-working like bees, must think of the good of our common hive in everything we do."

The name was agreed to with one accord. It remained to sign the Rules.

"Who'll sign first?" I queried.

"You do it, Fyodor. You were the first to moot the idea of the collective, the honour must be yours."

I signed, and after me the rest.

So there came into being our farming artel—the first in the Uman County—with which my whole life since has been bound up.

Just about the time the collective was formed, an important event happened in my private life. On November 9, my wife gave birth to a little girl, whom we called Marusya.

One day when I came home my wife met me with our little daughter in her arms, and I thought I could see the baby smiling at me, though she was only a few days old, just as the collective was.

"She was born under a lucky star!" my wife said.

Soon the Rules of the *Hive and Bee* were duly registered, under No. 1, at the County Land Board, and our artel received the rights of citizenship.

We were full of glowing hopes. But our joy proved premature. While we were putting through the formalities, our enemies—the kulaks—set to work to scare off the poor peasants, saying that whoever entered the collective was selling his soul to the evil one, and that nothing but weeds would grow in the common fields.

Many got cold feet and only nine households joined. Among them was that of my mother-in-law, Akulina Sofronovna Chuban, with her small sons. My father-in-law was no longer alive: he had been killed by lightning that summer, and the kulaks made the most of that too:

"The Almighty himself is against them," they said. "He will visit them all with lightning and thunderbolts."

It was very difficult all round. I would pick up my little daughter and, talking to her, try to comfort myself:

"Never mind, Marusya love, never mind! We are in the right."

By now the baby really did smile, and it would make me feel better.

My wife would serve supper. We would eat our potatoes and sunflower oil and dream of wheaten bread and bacon.

FIRST STEPS

I was elected artel chairman. Konfedrat became my right-hand man. Everyone set to work with a will, particularly the young people. Many of our young members belonged to the Komso-mol.

We made our headquarters at the eastern end of Talnoye, in such of the manor farm buildings as were still intact. One of them we fixed up as

living quarters for those who had no homes—Konfedrat and myself with our families. The office was there too.

Our threshing floor was where the market place is today. There was a thatched shed there and a solid brick barn.

All in all, we had between us three pairs of horses, three ploughs, six harrows and two carts.

A surveyor was sent over from Uman, and he marked out for us 51 hectares of land from the former Shuvalov estate. Our fields were just outside Talnoye—the hamlet of Razgonovka has spread out there now.

Came the spring of 1923—the first spring of our collective endeavour. We were out in the fields good and early, for the job we had to do was immense. Not an inch had been autumn-ploughed, and we had to break what was practically virgin soil. Then again, we had far too few horses and not enough seed either.

But we did have the main thing as we initiated collective farming in our country: a genuine desire to work and live in a new way, faith in the justice of our undertaking, confidence that the Soviet government would help us. And our hopes were vindicated: the Mutual Assistance Group helped us with seed and implements, and an army unit quartered near-by let us use its animals.

We worked with tremendous enthusiasm, starting early and finishing late. There was only

one backslider—a kulak hanger-on called Orlov, who was always grumbling and seldom worked.

Our first harvest was no worse than the kulaks had. The spring had been a good one for crops; also, the land given us had had a rest. True, we had no wheat, but we did not let that dishearten us: in the autumn we would plant wheat too, and for the present we could get white flour by bartering our barley. Apart from barley, we had oats and millet and buckwheat.

When it came to the threshing, on which all of us worked with a fine spirit, Orlov put in an appearance too. He pitched up the straw for the ricks. But he didn't stick at it very long: the third day the straw had to be pitched up high, so he made himself scarce and did not come any more.

He showed up only at the meeting where we discussed the distribution of the harvest. And that was where we saw this Petlyurovite and kulak henchman for what he was.

The meeting took place in the office. All the adult members of the artel were there. I reported briefly on the results of our work and suggested distributing the harvest as follows: a quarter should be set aside as a common fund for the needs of the farm (buying a seed drill and carts, building a shed, etc.), and the rest shared out—not according to the number of mouths to be fed, however, but according to the number of people who had actually worked.

Konfedrat, Rozhko and some others seconded this plan. The rest said nothing for a while. I noticed that they kept glancing at Orlov.

That individual put some questions to me, then he burst out:

"That's no good."

"What's no good?"

"Everything you've been saying. It's all wrong. What sort of collective, what sort of new life is it, if you go against equality? The crop should be shared out equally, by the number of mouths to feed. Take Akulina Sofronovna here"—he pointed to my mother-in-law. "Why should she suffer because she's got small children? They don't have to eat, is that how you figure it?"

I started explaining that I didn't mean children, but adults who had not worked, and that for children we should make separate arrangements. But by now the office was in an uproar. I found out afterwards that Orlov had been stirring up trouble among some of our people. My mother-in-law was the worst of the lot. She jumped up and screamed:

"Swindlers! Trying to cheat a poor widow! You're not going to get away with it!"

"Who's a swindler, Mother?" I wanted to know.

"You're the biggest one of the lot," she raved. "I can see it all well enough. You think if I have no book learning, you can do anything you like with me?"

The argument went on for a long time, until second cockcrow. Orlov, Akulina Sofronovna and a man called Kolodi insisted that the crop should be shared out according to the number of mouths and that nothing should be left for a common fund. That would have meant the end of the collective, the end of our hopes of a better life. . . . I went on fighting for my line. And in the end the majority backed me up. The artel wanted to live.

The next day Orlov, Kolodi and my mother-in-law took back their horses. A little later another member, Podgayetsky, left the collective too.

Podgayetsky's son Volodya stayed on, however. He was a very good, hard-working lad, a Komsomol member. He realized that we were right, and that his future lay in the collective.

A few years later, we sent him off to study. He graduated from college and today, if I am not mistaken, is on the staff of the Zaporozhye Regional Educational Board.

FRESH DIFFICULTIES AND FRESH HOPES

The autumn of 1923 set in. It started raining. Trees and buildings stood dripping. There were only three horses left in our cattle house, and a single cow—Nikita Konfedrat's—kept them company.

Things were pretty dismal. Only six families remained in the artel now, and so it had forfeited

its legal right to exist. But actually, it lived on. As before, we looked with hope to the future.

Talnoye was made a district centre. A District Committee of the Party was formed, and I brought before it the question of what was to happen to our collective.

Lenin's great cooperative plan was already widely known by this time, and the District Committees of the Party and the Komsomol showed the greatest concern for the fate of the district's first and only agricultural cooperative.

A score of Komsomol members—young fellows and girls—came to reinforce our little family, and they became the mainstay of the collective. Many of them we afterwards sent to study.

With the coming of these new members our legal existence was re-established, and we now decided to move out into the steppe, away from Talnoye. We wanted to develop, to grow, and there was more land there. Besides, being so close to Talnoye did us a lot of material damage. People's cows would trample our barley and millet, to say nothing of the chickens, which were for ever pecking at our crops.

One day in late autumn Konfedrat and myself set out eastward from Talnoye along the Gorny Tikich to look for a new location. The stream, flowing turbulently between its steep granite banks, excited my imagination:

"All that power being squandered for nothing! Think of the electric station we could have here!"

Some three kilometres out of Talnoye we turned right from the Tikich as it ran on towards Kherson. Before us lay a green copse, and on the left there was a wide shallow depression, known as Koza-chenkova Balka.

"Suppose we take that stretch, eh, Nikita?"

Konfedrat liked the place. "We could make a pond here," he said dreamily, "plant an orchard. . . ."

"Put up a mill," I added.

"Keep bees in the orchard"—he smiled blissfully.

"And have a vineyard on the slope. . . ."

In a word, we were both of us great at seeing visions of the future. Walking above that slope, we could already visualize our *Hive and Bee* flourishing, strong and prosperous.

On January 21, 1924, Lenin, our father and teacher, the great man who showed us the way to a happy life, passed away. The Central Committee of the Party proclaimed the Lenin enrollment. New thousands of workers and peasants joined the ranks of the Bolshevik Party.

I too decided to dedicate my life to the Party of Lenin and Stalin, to live and work for its cause. I put in my application and was admitted to probationary membership.

Our second spring in the collective was also a hard one. On our new location, we again had to sow on spring-ploughed land, and do it by hand because we were short of animals and implements. Into the bargain, the kulaks with their hangers-on jeered and jibed at us:

"Just look, those paupers are sowing again."

"Oh yes, they're sowing all right, but what are they going to reap?"

Still, it wasn't quite as hard as the spring before. We had the seed we needed, and we also had by now a little experience of working collectively.

That summer we worked out a system of gauging the work done. For the harvesting, the collective fields were split up between the different families, and each family knew how much it had to reap, bind and stack. These quotas were large ones, and the young Komsomol members who had no families joined together in groups.

My wife and I were given a five-hectare field of barley and a hectare of oats. My wife was going to have a baby, but she worked hard all the same. Our little girl used to play or sleep under a cornrick.

Halfway through one day, my wife said:

"I'm going home. . . ."

On the way, she took a dip in the pond. When she got home she gave birth to a son whom we named Vladimir, after Lenin.

KULAK SABOTAGE

In 1924 we reaped a very good crop, and it was distributed without any disputes. Setting aside twenty-five per cent for the needs of the farm became an established practice.

I don't remember exactly at this date what our balance sheet was like that year, but at any rate it warranted our asking the Agricultural Bank in Kiev for a loan. Early in 1925 it let us have a thousand rubles.

We were beginning to get on. We bought three pairs of horses, two ploughs, four carts, a seed drill and some good harness, and put up a number of farm buildings. Things that we could not have accomplished each on his own had become possible in the collective.

To the kulaks' disgust, the artel was getting stronger and going confidently ahead. Their prophecies that we would all squabble among ourselves did not materialize. And so these enemies of ours decided on violent action to get rid of the hated artel.

One dark night someone set fire to our buildings. The sound of voices shouting awakened me and I rushed to the door, but it had been locked on the outside.

Our neighbours let us out and helped to rescue our horses and Konfedrat's cow. The flames were quickly got under control. Only the

fodder barn was burnt down. The storehouse where we kept our corn and seed was a brick building, and only the thatched roof was destroyed.

The kulaks' scheme fell through. Our animals and corn were saved, and for the burnt-out barn we received insurance money.

That summer we bought a thresher, and after getting through with our own crop, we worked late into the autumn threshing for the individual farmers, acting on what our great leader Lenin had said about helping the poor and middle peasants. People around us were coming to see the advantages of collective farming and began applying for membership. My mother-in-law also came back to us, with her sons Yakov, Nikita and Samoilo.

TRACTORS!

In the autumn of 1925, tractors made their appearance on nearby state farms. We had heard talk about these wonderful machines before, had read about them in the papers. There were some people, of course, who would not believe it, saying it was all a pack of lies, but even they were convinced when they saw the tractors at work. And our members were tremendously enthusiastic about the new machines.

"If we could have one of those, now! Why, we'd move mountains!"

At a meeting of the collective I suggested buying a tractor.

"Hear, hear!" sounded on all sides.

"We've got to buy one, absolutely!"

We had a little money, and the rest we raised by selling a couple of horses and getting a small loan from the cooperative credit society.

A tractor was thereupon duly set aside for us—but they would not send it down, saying we must have a trained driver first.

What were we to do? Certainly we weren't going to hire and pay a driver! We put our heads together, and it was decided that I should take a course in tractor driving myself. I still have the certificate I received on completing it. Here it is:

CERTIFICATE

It is hereby certified that Fyodor Ivanovich Dubkovetsky attended the classes of the Ukrainian Automobile Marketing Office at the Kiev tractor depot from December 2, 1925, to January 15, 1926, in theory and practical operation of the Fordson tractor, according to the syllabus approved by the Vocational Training Board of the People's Commissariat of Education, and was found competent by the commission to operate the Fordson tractor.

Certified by sign and seal.

The tractor arrived at Talnoye station on April 13, 1926. From the station I drove it through the streets. I can say without exaggeration that this was a regular triumph. People flocked out as in the church processions of bygone days.

Peasants from all the surrounding villages would come to us to see the tractor on the job. They would measure the depth of its furrow, feel and even smell the earth it turned up.

We got our spring sowing done in record time. The early crops were put into the ground in five days.

After sowing the collective fields, we did a lot of ploughing and planting for peasants who had no horses. We also got our fallow ploughed as early as April—a thing that had never been done in the Talnoye District before.

At first I was the only one to drive the tractor; afterwards I taught Rozhko and some others.

1926 saw the beginning of scientific methods on our farm. As early as February we got the Talnoye agronomist to come over, and with him we worked out agrotechnical and production plans and fixed quotas of performance for different kinds of work. Where indicated by practice, these quotas were modified afterwards—increased or reduced as the case might be. Quality of work was made an essential condition of

quota fulfilment. If someone did not do a job properly, he had to do it over again.

Better methods were not slow to tell on the yield. As early as 1927, our winter wheat yielded a fine harvest—nearly 29 centners (2.9 tons) per hectare.

Particularly high were our returns from lucerne seed and vegetables. By now the collective was counting its money not in thousands of rubles, but in tens of thousands.

Our members also had money in their purses now. Gone were the days when money was saved painfully, kopek by kopek, to buy horse, plough or cart. People could spend their cash on better clothes, quality leather boots, and other personal requirements.

ON THE UPGRADE

In February 1927 my wife gave birth to a second son, whom we called Vasili. We were quite a family now. Yet we still had no proper home, and were living as before in a single room at the artel headquarters. Across the passage, Konfedrat with his family of small children huddled in one room in the same way. A good many of our members were renting what quarters they could.

Before this we had not been in a position to think of getting better homes. But now that our

daily bread had ceased to be a problem and milk and bacon had appeared on our tables, everybody started thinking about a home, and those who had one, about a better one. Our people had had enough of thatched roofs and earthen floors. They wanted a new style of home, with proper amenities and comforts.

One thing that had to be decided was where we should build.

Everyone agreed finally on the choice of the site—above Kozachenkovo Balka. It was close to the fields, coming out of the house you would see all our land spread out before you, and it was a good place, too, for making a pond, planting an orchard, putting up a mill—all the things that Konfedrat liked to plan and talk about.

The other question was what we should build.

It was decided first of all to put up some farm structures we needed. But living quarters had to be built too. And some said there should be a separate cottage for each family, while others favoured one big house for all of us.

Opinions divided. I for my part hesitated and did not know which side to take.

We were the pioneers of socialism in the countryside, the initiators of collective farming, and our artel was a little island in a sea of individual peasant farms. We had no experience to guide us as we set about building the socialist life, and

while there were many things we did right in those early days, there were also quite a few that we did wrong.

The summer passed. We took stock of our finances, and saw that they fully allowed us to start building. After long reflection, it was decided to put up one big house. I went to Uman, told the architects our requirements and paid to have plans for the building drawn up.

The plans were soon ready. We examined them, made an estimate of the cost, and were appalled: it was far too much money. And so we thought we would try our own hand at drawing up the plans—plans for a house that would not cost so much.

I had had to act, at various times, as agronomist and veterinary, tractor driver and engineman (we had already bought an oil engine), blacksmith and carpenter and many another thing. And now, it seemed, I would have to turn architect as well.

I got hold of some building literature and began to study it. The thing did not strike me as so very formidable. I sketched out one set of plans, a second, a third, took counsel with the builders, revised the plans, took counsel again and again revised them. Then I drew up the cost estimates: a house of forty-six rooms with common canteen, kitchen, bakery and other facilities would cost fifty thousand rubles.

I asked an engineer from Uman to come over and showed him my plans. He spent a long time studying them, then said:

"They're all right—only the staircase isn't any too good."

He was right about that. My staircase was not a success. Still, we did not change it, as that would have added greatly to the cost.

The building plans and estimates were approved at a general meeting of our membership, and in the spring of 1928 construction started. I acted as construction chief. The bricks we made ourselves. The tractor, the engine, the seed drills, reapers and threshers that we already had—mechanization of the more arduous jobs, in a word—allowed us to release many people from the fields, and all these people we detailed to the building work. In the course of the summer we put up the first storey and a big brick cattle house.

Besides horses, we already had pedigree cows and a bull. A dairy farm was established. Before long, we had a pig farm too.

This was a period of tremendous activity in the life of the collective, very much in keeping with our name of *Hive and Bee*. Each of us brought to the hive everything he could: his energy, his enthusiasm, his experience and knowledge.

Tired, but eager and happy, we would sit down in the evening on the stacks of timber at our building site, and make plans without end—for tomor-

row, for the day after, even for the distant future. Our one-time dreams were becoming a reality.

How long was it since the maize had been rustling behind our house? Now people were digging pits there and planting apple, pear and cherry trees. Only three weeks before, there had just been a little brook trickling at the bottom of the slope before our windows; now a dam blocked its way, turning it into a wide pond.

We already had a mill to grind our corn: we had bought the necessary equipment, and the power for it came from the engine. But we wanted a windmill too—it was to pump water to our new dwelling and to the cattle houses.

“GAINS OF OCTOBER”

We were in our seventh spring. A big pond stretched at the bottom of Kozachenkova Balka; above it, our young orchard thrived green.

Newspapermen writing about our collective have often compared it to a young sapling that in time grew to be a mighty oak. That's quite an apt comparison, I would say. Raging winds battered the sapling, cruel frosts attacked it; but it only grew the stronger, thrust its roots deeper and deeper into the soil, pushed upward and flung out its branches ever wider.

The artel numbered thirty-five families by now. In the teeth of the kulak prophecy that the hive

would fall to pieces and the bees scatter, concord and harmony reigned.

We could have increased our membership much more. Many people came asking to be admitted. But they were from other villages, we had no place for them to live, and walking five, ten and twenty kilometres to work is not practicable.

Some we did admit. Now, how could we help admitting a man like Makar Gotsik? He came along that spring, looked our farm over with a knowing eye, and said:

"It's all very nice, friends, but where is your honey? How is that—*Hive and Bee*, and no honey?"

"Why," we asked, "is honey your line?"

"Well, it used to be, when I worked for the Count. I reckon I haven't forgotten the way of it. Used to collect fifty and fifty-five pounds from every hive."

"And how much could you collect for us?" someone asked.

"You'll see in good time. It's best to judge by results."

And so we did admit him, this former hired hand of the Count's. Very soon he had thirteen hives set up and in a couple of months he caught some swarms and put them in.

And that very first summer, he produced nearly fifteen hundred pounds of honey.

That year we again reaped a good crop. Our people were beginning to work wonders on the land that had been Count Shuvalov's. Konfedrat, who had grown up on the estate, would say:

"The Count would burst with envy if he could see how we work his land and what harvests we get from it."

Our winter corn was planted on April-ploughed fallow. The spring crops we now put in on autumn-ploughed land, early and quickly. We were able to do it because we had a tractor, twenty-six horses, and all the tools we needed.

The harvesting was done in ten days, the threshing in twenty. Our winter crop was in the ground and all field work finished by September 1. Whatever ploughing went on was for the spring.

Gotsik proved to be not only a wizard of a beekeeper, but a good vegetable grower as well. He set up some frames under glass and got very good yields indeed.

We got a large income from our dairy farm, which was run by Konfedrat: by that summer of 1929 we had thirty cows. Still more profitable were our pigs, of which there were nearly 500 by the autumn. Even our pond produced results the very first summer—several centners of carp.

That autumn nearly everyone in the collective moved into the new two-storey house. This was a great and festive occasion, not only because we

former have-nots were moving from thatched huts into warm and airy quarters, but also because our artel was switching to commune status.

We had built up a good, solid farm. Run on planned lines with the use of machinery, it gave us plenty of produce. Now we were living in a comfortable house, with a common canteen, bakery, laundry and nursery.

Of course, we could not give effect in full to the principle of communism—"from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"—but we could relieve our women of kitchen drudgery and help them to bring up their children, and we thought it our duty to do so.

We had prepared everything carefully for becoming a commune. The head nurse, the cook and the baker had been sent to special classes. All the rooms were properly furnished, and everything was clean and comfortable.

We had all the cereals, vegetables, sugar, meat and milk we needed. Every Saturday we would slaughter a hog weighing 120-150 kilograms. In the canteen, you could not only choose your dishes, but order in advance the kind of breakfast, dinner or supper you wanted. In the busy season, breakfast and dinner were served in the fields.

Clothes and footwear everyone bought to his own taste. The children were fed and clothed by the commune.

We decided to change our old name of *Hive*

and Bee. When the general meeting was discussing what the new name should be, I said:

"Comrades, we have come out on a bright, happy road, have attained a life of prosperity and culture. Who gave us that life?"

"The October Revolution!" one of our Kom-somol members replied.

And we called our commune *Gains of October*.

BEACONS OF SOCIALISM

Around this time, the newspaper *Radyanske Selo* (*Soviet Village*)—or was it the Peasant's Table Calendar?—printed a map of the Ukraine with the agricultural artels and communes marked on it with little circles. They were few and far between, one or two to a province.

The caption to this map read: "Beacons of Socialism in the Countryside."

We in our *Gains of October* made a point of reading everything that was written about these beacons. We compared our life with that of other artels and communes and drew upon their experience.

One collective not far from ourselves was the *Kotovskiy* commune, made up of men who had served under the famous Civil War hero. Another was the *Ploughman* artel in the village of Guskovo near Zvenigorodka, which afterwards took the name of *Shevchenko*.

Widely renowned in those days was the *Lenin* commune, near Sinelnikovo. Its chairman was Dmitry Kuznetsov, one of the pioneers of collective farming. He, like myself, was awarded the Order of Lenin on the Soviet Ukraine's thirtieth anniversary, and to both of us has fallen the high honour of representing the collective farms of the Ukraine on the Collective-Farm Council of the U.S.S.R. Government.

Of the seven collective farming pioneers who were awarded decorations on that occasion, I was acquainted previously only with Yakov Ivanchenko, the organizer and chairman of the *Ploughman*. This collective was located eighteen kilometres from our own, and I was there on numerous occasions, studying the way they did things. The *Ploughman* was formed practically at the same time as the *Hive and Bee* and at the outset numbered twelve households—the families of Red Army men and poor peasants. By 1928 it already had a tractor and other complex machinery. They did their farming efficiently and lived in plenty.

The first agricultural collectives vindicated the hopes of the great leaders of socialism, Lenin and Stalin, and furnished practical proof of the advantages of collective, socialist husbandry. By their example they won the millions of poor and middle peasants for collective farming.

In 1929, the "year of great change," our commune became a place of pilgrimage. Not a day

passed but excursions came to us from other villages and districts, from around Uman, Cherkassy and Kirovograd. There would be two and three such excursions a day. We had to fit up two rooms for the visitors' use, make arrangements to feed them and appoint a guide.

The excursionists were interested in our farming methods, in our machinery, in the way the work was organized. Among the women there were some who, after hearing a lot of kulak tales, expected to find that we "all slept under one blanket," men and women together. In most cases these same women, after seeing how we did live, became fervent advocates of collective farming when they got home. Quite often it was they that were the first to launch out against the kulaks and drive them from the villages.

The poor and middle peasants began to flock solidly to the collective farms. And we were proud of the fact that in the Talnoye District as many as ten kolkhozes were formed with our assistance.

The whole country was becoming covered with collectives. Those were days of a profound revolution in the countryside, which, as Comrade Stalin, our leader and teacher, has said, was equivalent in its consequences to the Revolution of October 1917.

In the spring of 1930, thirty tractors and thousands of teams of kolkhoz horses and oxen went out into the fields of the Talnoye District. They

moved across the peasant allotments, ploughing up the balks that separated them. How many disputes, lawsuits, fights and even murders these wretched balks had caused in days gone by! Now they were disappearing for ever from the face of our land.

STUDY AND BACK TO WORK

In January 1931 I was called to the headquarters of the Party District Committee.

"Well," I thought, "I suppose they'll try again to send me somewhere. A promotion."

The District Secretary said:

"Would you like to go to study, Fyodor? We have a chance to send you to the Higher Collective Farming School in Kiev."

Nothing could have pleased me better.

"It's like asking a hungry man if he'd like a pie," I replied.

"That's fine," the Secretary said. "Go and learn all they have to teach you. You know what a kolkhoz chairman has to be like? Far better informed than the rank-and-file collective farmer!"

I came home. Marusya was sitting there, doing her homework, and even my two youngest were looking at a book. I felt keener to study than ever.

But what would my wife say? After all, I would be leaving her with three children on her hands.

But my wife was always my faithful friend and comrade.

"Don't you worry about us," she said. "The youngsters will be in the kindergarten, and I'll work as I always have done. I'll earn enough to keep us."

I went, and benefited greatly by the training at the school. I systematized all the information I had picked up in agronomy and animal breeding, and got a sound political grounding.

Unfortunately, I was not able to complete the course: forces were needed badly, and in the autumn of 1931, the students were sent on working assignments.

I landed in Moldavia and worked in the Collective-Farm Association there. Then they summoned me to Odessa. The idea was to make me head of a machine and tractor station (MTS). I don't say the work didn't appeal to me, but I felt it was better to be a good kolkhoz chairman than just a passable MTS director.

In the spring of 1932 I came back to my *Gains of October*.

I got a wonderful welcome, but when I started asking how things were in the commune, people looked glum. My wife too seemed rather cast down.

"What's the matter? Anything wrong?"

"You'll see yourself," she replied unwillingly.

And I did. I saw all sorts of things that were wrong even before I had crossed the yard; it was

unswept, and there were ploughs and other tools lying about just anywhere. Inside, the house was ill-kept too.

I walked into the canteen. The place was untidy, the air full of tobacco smoke. People were eating with their caps on. The tables were piled wastefully with bread, the floor littered with crusts. When I started picking them up, some young fellow—a newcomer, evidently—looked at me doing it and snickered.

It made my blood boil, all this mismanagement, even to the point of taking my appetite away. I marched into the office and asked the bookkeeper to let me see what stocks they had of grain, food-stuffs and everything else.

I took one look at the records and clutched at my head. There was only grain enough left for another month or six weeks, and next to no concentrate for the animals.

“However did you come to such a pass?”

There was no finding out who was to blame. One man put the responsibility on another, that other on somebody else.

I went along to the Party District Committee. It was with some misgiving that I stepped into the District Secretary's room: suppose, as in Odessa, they decided to send me to the MTS or some other place, instead of my own collective?

But the District Committee, I found, was itself worried about our commune.

"It's good to have you back, Fyodor," the Secretary said, and I could see he meant it. "We must save the *Gains of October*, else it will go to pieces altogether."

"So I'm to stay with the commune?"

"Yes, take a good look at things, and see what you think. Maybe it would be better to switch over to artel status?"

It didn't take me long to figure out what had happened to the commune. With everybody joining the collective farms, the membership had all but trebled, new people had come in, they needed to be trained in the right spirit, given proper leadership. And people who could do that were lacking.

We had much more land now: 525 hectares, as against the former 150. That could not be made to yield well in the space of a year or two: land also needs to be tended long and carefully. Before, when we were doing things on a smaller scale, I could handle them. Now it was difficult to cope with everything.

And I recalled what Comrade Stalin had said in his well-known "Reply to Comrades on the Collective Farms":

"The organization and administration of communes is a complicated and difficult matter. Large and well-established communes can exist and develop only if they possess experienced cadres and tried leaders. . . . That is why the commune,

which represents a higher form, can become the principal link in the collective-farm movement only in the future."

I consulted with the District Committee, talked to the people on our management board, then called a general meeting. A lively discussion developed. Some of our commune veterans were not keen at first to switch to artel status. However, in the end people realized that our status needed to be modified. The meeting resolved to abolish the system of communal meals and to introduce rigid economy and discipline. But certain things we kept. Why should our women bake at home when we had a fine bakery? And so, nobody collected in grain. Instead, each family was issued coupons to the bakery for the amount earned and collected in bread—white or black, as they preferred. And of course we kept the nursery too.

We switched finally to artel status only in 1935, after the Second All-Union Congress of Collective-Farm Shock Workers, which adopted the Stalin Rules of the Agricultural Artel—the constitution of kolkhoz life.

AS IN THE TALE OF CINDERELLA

"Once upon a time," there was a woman in our artel. She worked in the fields, the cattle houses, the pigpens. She went to Kiev to attend training classes and was afterwards head of the nurs-

ery for our children. Then she was in charge of a vegetable-growing team.

Her good work won her recognition and respect both among our own members and in the district generally, and after a while she was admitted to the Communist Party.

Her field of public activity grew wider and wider: she was elected to the management board of our collective, then to the board of the district Collective-Farm Association. And then this one-time poor peasant woman was elected a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. She would go periodically to Kharkov and Kiev and have a say in deciding matters of state.

What I am telling here is not a fairy tale about poor Cinderella, but the true story of a woman from the *Gains of October*. That woman is my wife, Yevdokiya Nikolayevna.

In 1935, a great honour fell to her lot. She was sent from our district to the regional conference of kolkhoz shock workers in Kiev, and there she was elected delegate to the Second All-Union Congress of Collective-Farm Shock Workers.

It is easy to understand the interest with which our whole country followed that congress, for there the Model Rules of the Agricultural Artel were being framed.

We knew from the newspapers that Comrade Stalin himself was sharing actively in the proceed-

ings. And, one and all, we envied my wife. Each one of us would have been happy to see, if only from afar, the man whom we regard as our father. And she was perhaps sitting at the same table with him.

On a cold February day she came back, her face pink with the frost and with happiness.

"Tell us everything, everything, Yevdokiya Nikolayevna!"

It was a long time since I had seen my wife so deeply stirred. She brought out a pad, opened it and started telling her story, in circumstantial detail. I still remember the pictures she drew, though many years have passed since then.

Moscow blanketed with snow. The Red Square. Lenin's tomb. The gates of the Kremlin, where our great Stalin lives and works. The vast Kremlin Palace.

"The tsars used to live in it. And now we, ordinary peasant folk, were sitting there," she said, her eyes shining. "And with us were Comrades Stalin, Kalinin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich. . . ."

Comrade Stalin, it may be recalled, did not take the floor at this congress. And my wife was desperately anxious to hear him. Maria Demchenko, the famous Ukrainian Stakhanovite beetgrower, who was on the commission for framing the Rules, came to her aid.

"Come with me," she said. "Comrade Stalin is sure to speak."

And in the commission Comrade Stalin did speak, several times. Along with others, he made comments on the draft of the Rules and suggested amendments.

"I was quite close to him," my wife informed us proudly. "Most of the time he sat listening to what the collective-farm delegates said, and smiling. He probably liked hearing us. And when he spoke, he got to his feet and talked as simply as if he were just having a chat with us."

What Comrade Stalin spoke of was the new, socialist ways of life in the collectives, and how personal and public interests could best be harmonized.

My wife particularly liked what he said about women on the collective farms. The original draft of the Rules merely stated that work should be made easier for them. Comrade Stalin proposed that women members of the kolkhoz should be exempted from work for a month before and a month after childbirth, and should receive half their average earnings during all this time.

This proposal was greeted with loud applause and adopted unanimously.

"Then we were photographed with Comrade Stalin."

As she said that, my wife took some large neatly-wrapped photos out of her suitcase and

passed them around. She was sitting in the same row as Stalin, next but two to him.

After the collective-farm congress, my wife was present with the other delegates at the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets, which passed the historic decision to amend the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

THE SEVENTEENTH SPRING

We had entered our seventeenth spring. It remains especially distinct in my mind—perhaps because it was also the seventeenth spring for my daughter Marusya. Marusya would be through with school soon, and that spring she somehow blossomed out all at once.

One day in May, I was coming home with her from Talnoye. Looking down from a little knoll, we had a fine view of our two-storeyed white house above the pond and of the spacious kolkhoz yard with its numerous structures and tall, jolly windmill.

Behind the big house was a smaller one, recently put up. One half of it consisted of living quarters, in the other we had our club, office, laboratory and medical station.

Ringed it all in was the huge orchard, riotous with blossom just now. Looking from it to my little girl in her white dress, I felt a thrill of happiness:

"The seventeenth spring—how lovely it is!"

Our homestead stood out on the slope like a little blossoming white island in a vast sea of green. The winter crops were already shooting up, the spring corn and the sugar beets had sprouted nicely. Over by the copse, the early-ploughed fallow made a patch of black. We had ploughed it before May Day.

My artell! My joy, my flesh and blood!

Sixteen kolkhoz springs had passed by, one after the other. This was the seventeenth. Newspapers were beginning to liken our *Gains of October* to a house of plenty. As epigraph to a story about it, one of them took Stalin's words:

"Collective farms, as a socialist form of organization of farming, may perform miracles of economic construction if they are led by real revolutionaries, Bolsheviki, Communists."

Apparently, the writer of the story considered me to be such a revolutionary. That was flattering, but the conscience of a Communist told me:

"What you have accomplished, Fyodor, is only the beginning, only a small part of what has to be done. Yes, this is plenty—but it is so by comparison with the past, with the life our members led before they joined the collective, and in its early years. So don't sit back complacently, but drive on and on ahead!"

In the *Hive and Bee*, we had only dreamed of steady yields of 15 and 16 centners per hectare

on the whole of our grain area. In the *Gains of October*, the dream had become a reality. Our average grain yield in the years 1935-38 was 18.5 centners. The yield of sugar beet was 255 centners per hectare.

Neither Count Shuvalov nor even the richest kulaks had ever got such crops out of this land.

We had killed the "theory" of the declining fertility of the soil, according to which land must be given long periods of rest to improve the soil structure. Our people had rejuvenated the old soil not by long rest periods, but by travopolye crop rotation, by deep ploughing, by good and timely cultivation.

We had enough tractors and other machines now, also a laboratory of our own, and our own kolkhoz agronomist, Ivan Belous.

That seventeenth spring brought us fresh achievements all along the line, but of them anon; just now I want to say a few words about another dream of ours which also came true.

The reader already knows about our windmill. We used the windmill to pump water into the tower from which it was piped to our living quarters, to the stable, the cowshed, the pighouse. In the cowshed, automatic drinking fountains had been installed.

Next to the windmill we put up a small powerhouse, which supplied light to all our buildings.

In the evenings, our house was reflected like a fairy palace in the glassy surface of the pond.

But living in this palace was a crowded business by now. We needed to build. And just as ten years before, the question arose of what to build.

This time there were hardly any advocates of one big house. Everybody wanted to have his door open straight into a garden and to see roses and dahlias blooming under his windows. And our new homes were not to be the old-time peasant cottages, oh no! Everyone dreamed of a pretty, modern house with a veranda.

Our members had the money to do it, and all of them were anxious to build. The only thing was to have some sort of order in this business, and we decided to draw up an overall building plan for the whole village.

First of all we proceeded to erect, by our own efforts, a number of solidly-built, well-appointed farm structures.

Then, in the spring of 1938, a wide level street was laid out beyond our orchard. On either side of it, we would build the new homes and plant them around with fruit trees. Work on the first four cottages was started then and there, and soon they were nearly finished.

We never lost sight, however, of the need to put up farm buildings. For without them we could not get ahead.

EXHIBITION OF ACHIEVEMENT AND ABUNDANCE

In my work, I relied a great deal on our Komsomol youth. Our Komsomol organization was a live one and renowned throughout the district. Particularly did it distinguish itself in the movement for solid collectivization and in the days when the Stakhanov movement was getting under way in our artel.

The most active among our Komsomol members were sent to study and appointed to responsible positions. A number were admitted to the Party, swelling the kolkhoz Party organization.

Besides my wife and myself, our Party organization included: the Komsomol Secretary, Ivan Stepanenko, who was one of our chauffeurs, Nikita Konfedrat's brother Ivan, who became my assistant, Stakhanovite section leaders Motya Churpita and Gorpina Kovpak and a number of others.

The bountiful kolkhoz harvest was home. We had completed our grain deliveries to the state early in August and were threshing the rest of the corn. The threshing floor was piled high with it, and we had mountains of fruit and vegetables.

Our four lorries carted our produce to Uman, to Kiev, and even all the way to Odessa.

Butter was made at our creamery, and we had a curing shop, too, making our own hams and sausages.

Everybody was working hard.

We were in a hurry, so as to get all the main jobs done by the opening of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition.

Our collective had won the right to exhibit in practically all departments, and it was a tremendous occasion when our group left for Moscow to go to the Exhibition.

Besides myself, agronomist Ivan Belous, field-team foreman Yakov Chuban and various section leaders, the *Gains of October* was represented at the Exhibition by Nikita Konfedrat, as head of our dairy farm, dairymaids Marina Vronskaya and Odarka Berezhnaya, pig-tender Straton Gordiyenko, fish breeder Vasili Gaishuk, poultry-tender Christina Kirilenko, beekeeper Makar Gotsik and others.

Thanks to the efforts of our dairymaids, our cows were by this time milking three thousand litres a year each [1 litre=0.26 gallons]. Gotsik, for his part, had in these ten years brought up our beekeeping establishment to 210 hives. The yields of honey were big ones: 650 kilograms in 1929, 1,450 in 1931, 7,200 in 1932, and in the last couple of years before the Exhibition, the yield was 10 and even 11 thousand kilograms. Part of the honey we sold, part was shared out as earnings among our members. Some families would get as much as 50 and 60 kilograms of it at the end of the year.

Gotsik also proved clever at making wine. He made it out of cherries, currants, gooseberries, apples and rhubarb, and when we laid out a vineyard, out of grapes as well. In 1939 our kolkhoz produced thirty thousand litres of wine, and the following year, forty thousand.

We did very well, too, out of our truck gardening and the vegetables we grew under glass.

The artel was getting more prosperous all the time, and earnings per workday unit increased accordingly. In 1939 they amounted to three kilograms of grain and three rubles fifty kopeks in cash, not counting fish, honey, melons, apples, wine, etc.

In return for raw materials turned in to the state—hides, wool and so on—we were supplied with felt boots and the makings of leather boots and shoes, enough of them for every working member to get a pair.

One day not long ago, Gotsik was telling our young people what he and his wife and daughter earned in the kolkhoz in 1939: 2.9 tons of grain, 65 kilograms of honey, four pairs of felt boots, two pairs of leather boots (one of them high-grade leather), thirty-six metres of textiles, two suckling pigs and 3,700 rubles in cash.

In addition, he had his own vegetable plot and his own cow, reared from a calf assigned him from the kolkhoz herd. While the calf was grow-

ing up, he was able to buy milk from our dairy farm at cost price.

And Gotsik's record of workday units was just about the average. Our average annual pre-war labour performance per able-bodied member used to be 350 workday units. Some families had 1,500 or even more units to their credit.

The way our people lived, the appearance they presented, had improved beyond all measure. My father-in-law, old Nikolai Chuban, would not have known his children if he could have risen from the dead. His sons now had good serge suits, his daughters, smart silk dresses.

Each passing year brought fresh proof to the poor and middle peasants of former days that the kolkhoz way was the only right way for the peasant toiler.

The trip to the Agricultural Exhibition was not only a great festive occasion for us, but an education, an "advanced course" in collective farming. It showed us how people in other parts of the country were working.

I returned from Moscow with many new plans and ideas. In the New Village section of the Exhibition I had seen some charming cottages, and I took many points from them for the building work we ourselves were doing.

Gotsik studied the methods of the most successful winegrowers and in 1940 laid out a vineyard of our own.

It was at the Exhibition, too, that I was again fired by the ambition of harnessing our Gorny Tikich. I promised myself that the *Gains of October* should have a hydroelectric station.

MEETING NIKITA SERGEYEVICH KHRUSHCHOV

Now I want to go back a little.

In January or February 1939 I went to Kiev to attend a conference of the region's foremost farmers. There I at once came across an acquaintance, Anna Denisovna Koshevaya.

"You know who's going to be at our conference?" she asked, and herself replied: "Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov!"

I had never seen the Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party's Central Committee. Anna Denisovna had both seen him and heard him speak.

"He knows farming inside out," she said. "It's simply a pleasure to listen to him!"

Comrade Khrushchov, who at that time was also First Secretary of the Kiev Regional Party Committee, sat near the rostrum all through this conference and followed the speeches with close attention.

I too had entered my name to speak. Sitting there waiting my turn, I was pretty worked up: why, one of Comrade Stalin's closest associates,

the leader of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, was going to listen to me. Suppose I got muddled or said something silly?

I had plenty to tell the conference and Comrade Khrushchov. Other delegates told of lesser achievements, and even so Nikita Sergeyevich applauded. But some of them he would challenge.

"That's very good, but how did you accomplish it? Share your experience, tell us about your methods."

My turn came and, walking up the aisle, I was quite determined to start off with the methods our kolkhoz had evolved for growing sugar beets. But somehow it happened that I told about that only towards the end of my speech, while after delivering my opening message of greetings, I plunged straight into criticism.

"People talked here about the time for planting the beets—about the exact date when they should be put in. Now that's something that can best be seen on the spot, in each particular kolkhoz. But we still have some district officials, I'm sorry to say, who all but order you to plant the beets at the same time as the early cereal crops. And what comes of it?"

Here I pulled up short for a moment; but glancing towards the platform, I read encouragement in Nikita Sergeyevich's eye, and went on:

"Here is what comes of it. The officials report to the regional capital: Look what fine fellows

we are, we've got the beets in the ground already. But the trouble is, that ground's too cold for the beets. Afterwards, with the sun, it gets warmer, it's true, and the plants begin to sprout—but oh, how feebly and wretchedly! And many never sprout at all. . . .”

I heard a round of clapping in the hall. Evidently quite a few people thought as I did. That heartened me, and I continued boldly:

“I here have been kolkhoz chairman going on for seventeen years, and I've never planted beets early.”

“How many years?” a voice on the platform asked, and I recognized it as Comrade Khrushchov's.

Other delegates told me afterwards:

“When you said how long you'd been chairman, Nikita Sergeyevich actually edged closer to the rostrum, he was so interested.”

Comrade Khrushchov took the floor towards the end of the conference. He spoke in detail about all departments of kolkhoz farming, and gave the same earnest attention to the proper time for beet planting. He had a good word to say for me too.

Naturally, I felt tremendously pleased. And not so much because he had urged other kolkhoz chairmen to take a leaf out of my book as because he supported the authority of the practical collective farmers, the experienced husbandmen. . . .

A year passed, and again I came to a conference of front-rank farmers. It was meeting in the magnificent new assembly hall of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine.

This time I was elected to the presidium and took my seat on the platform, in the second row, behind and a little to one side of Nikita Sergeyeovich. Catching sight of me, he gave a friendly nod.

When I took the floor at this conference I dwelt on the enormous importance of the July 1939 decision of the U.S.S.R. Government and the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.) on measures to advance collective animal husbandry. The beneficial effects of this decision were already making themselves felt in the collectives.

Our kolkhoz, for example, had had five livestock farms even before the decision was passed. Yet we had found ourselves at a disadvantage compared with collectives which did not raise livestock or did so only perfunctorily. For the deliveries to the state were fixed in those days in proportion to the number of animals the kolkhoz possessed.

"Now our deliveries are fixed according to our land area," I said. "And we have found it very much to our advantage. After making the deliveries, we still have a lot of hides, wool and other livestock products left over. The hides and wool we have turned in to the state over and

above the planned amount, and have got in return a pair of leather boots and another of felt boots for every adult member. The meat we work up into sausage and ham, the milk into butter. It brings us big returns in cash."

Again Nikita Sergeyevich showed an interest in our collective. During the intermission he stopped me and said:

"Your livestock farming seems to be in good shape. And what else have you been doing?"

Here Comrade Serdyuk, Secretary of the Kiev Regional Party Committee, joined in.

"Dubkovetsky takes good care of his members too," he said. "Let him tell you about his building scheme."

So I told Nikita Sergeyevich about the new kolkhoz village we were building, with electricity and water laid on, and about our having planted twenty apple, five pear and ten cherry trees on each of the household plots. Nor could I keep from telling him about my long-standing dream—a hydroelectric station of our own on the Gorny Tikich.

Nikita Sergeyevich listened attentively, asked about the details, and said:

"Why, everybody in the district will be wanting to join your kolkhoz now."

A JOURNEY TO A FAR-OFF LAND

The rye was ripening in the fields, the cherries hung red in the orchards, the air smelt of flowers and new-mown hay. It was the end of June 1940.

I was living in my new house, in the broad new street stretching from the kolkhoz orchard to the copse.

One morning I switched on the radio, and could hardly believe my ears:

"Bessarabia and North Bukovina are free. . . ."

The parts where I had been born and bred were free at last! The land I had not seen for twenty-two years, and which had seemed so infinitely remote, had come closer to me overnight.

"Yevdokiya Nikolayevna!" I called to my wife. "Get ready to pay your mother-in-law a visit. . . ."

But the harvest was just around the corner, we had our hands full, and it was not until August that I was able to visit my native land.

A strange feeling possessed me at the sight of the Dniester, so recently the boundary between the socialist and the capitalist world. Behind me lay the Soviet Ukraine. It had taken me in when I was homeless, had sheltered me like a son of its own. It had come to be my mother, my home, my everything. And before me, so familiar and yet so strange, stretched the land of my fa-

thers. It had been walled off from me for so long. . . . How would my native village receive me? And were they still alive—my mother, my brothers and sisters?

There, across the Dniester, was the village of Ataki. On the hill beyond it, Khotin. Fields broken up into narrow strips: maize, rye stubble, buckwheat, then more stubble, with the ricks still standing in it. . . .

In the rickyards, they were threshing. The rich with machines, the poor with flails. It all seemed so unreal. Everything just as it had been twenty-two years before, as if history had stood still here all that time.

My wife was wearing a silk dress and an attractive pair of shoes. I had a grey summer suit on, and a light hat on my head. The peasant in whose cart we were travelling addressed us as "Sir" and "Madam." This struck my wife as very funny, she couldn't help laughing. The peasant apologized:

"It's habit, you know. We'll learn to say 'comrade' after a while. . . ."

We passed the village of Nedoboyevtsy—the Rumanian gentry had changed its name to Nedobuttsy. Then came my Zarozhany. They had Rumanianized its name too. There was a pothouse at every crossroad.

We turned off the road into one alley, then into another. I made out our shack, under its roof of

time-blackened thatch, from quite a way off. A little rick of unthreshed grain stood at the back of it.

There was the familiar old gate, and the spreading oak beside it. A dog barked in the yard as I walked in. The bark brought out a tall, thin peasant, his face overgrown with beard. I could tell at once that it was my brother, but I wanted to see if he would know me, and said my wife and I were travellers wanting shelter for the night.

Though it was still daylight, he did not recognize me, and only showed surprise at travellers turning up such a long way from the main road.

"I suppose you couldn't get put up anywhere," he said.

But at this point his wife and schoolboy son appeared in the doorway. They were quicker, and guessed right away who I was.

"Why, Dad," the boy cried out, "likely that's Uncle Fyodor!"

I looked across at my brother; there were tears in his eyes.

"Fyodor! Alive?"

He threw his arms around me, kissed me, pleaded excuses for his blunder:

"Why, it never entered my head it could be you. I see a prosperous gentleman walking in, looking like a factory manager or something. . . . And to think it's you . . . you. . . ."

The news of my arrival spread like wildfire

through Zarozhany and the villages around. People came to look, as if I were some outlandish wonder. Many I recognized at once, particularly those who had been with me in the fighting against the Rumanian invaders.

What impressed them all most was that I was chairman of a kolkhoz. For those poverty-stricken villagers I was a representative of the new life, of which they had heard so much that was good and fascinating, and at the same time so many absurd, foolish tales.

"So you're chairman of a kolkhoz?" they would ask. "Of a real kolkhoz?"

"How do you mean, real?" I would query.

"Well, you know, where everything's owned in common. Does it work out all right?"

"You're one of ourselves, Fyodor, you explain so that we'll understand," someone else would chime in.

And I would do my best to explain our way of life to people who, distrustful of all things new, weighed, pondered and appraised like prospective customers at a country fair. My wife did the same among the women. They asked her about everything, felt her dress, her coat, her shoes.

I spent a fortnight with my home folk. Talked to the people, revisited my childhood haunts, went to the grave of my mother. And at the end I attended a wedding: one of my nieces was getting married.

WHAT CAME AFTER

What came after, everybody knows. Before very long, the Great Patriotic War began. . . .

But I should like to keep the reader's attention fixed a little longer on those prewar days of seething creative activity.

It was June, clear and sunny. Who knew then that the guns were already trained upon us and about to open up? We at the *Gains of October* were getting ready for corn harvest, were cutting the hay, extracting the honey, building our street, carting asphalt from Uman to make pavements.

We had many a fine ambition and plan. The collective was getting stronger and richer all the time. I was making arrangements with the Rural Electric Projects Office about the hydroelectric station we meant to erect.

Everything around made one's heart rejoice. Agronomist Belous declared that the winter wheat would yield twenty-eight and thirty centners per hectare, and bookkeeper Mikhail Voloshenyuk estimated our returns at a million at the very least.

We got a surprise from our dairymaids, Marina Vronskaya and Odarka Berezhnaya. Under the new regulations on extra pay for topping the specified yield, each of them was getting 350 litres of milk a month, or more than ten litres a

day. Both women had cows of their own. But what use had they now for these cows? And so they came to me and said:

"Put our cows in the collective herd. We don't need them. They've become a burden...."

On the eve of the war the kolkhoz was supplying practically all the needs of its members. People did not want to bother any more with cows, pigs and poultry of their own. In addition to the earnings distributed in kind, everyone could get bacon, meat and sausage, butter, milk and wine from the kolkhoz on account of his cash earnings.

More and more often, people would say we should again relieve our women of kitchen work. We did start doing something in that direction: serving breakfasts and dinners at a kolkhoz canteen. A typical breakfast menu would be: two eggs, sixty grams of butter, white bread or pie, milk, tea or coffee, and sometimes fried fish or sausage.

We had our elementary school, a club with a film projector, a medical station, a cooperative shop. Our kolkhoz was carrying out faithfully Stalin's slogan of making all collective farms Bolshevik farms, and their members prosperous people.

And all this we were compelled for a time to give up. The able-bodied men joined the army. Part of the other people evacuated to

the east, part scattered through remote villages.

I am not going to describe the road east. It has been described more than once before now, and there is nothing that I can add. That road brought us to our fraternal republic of Russia.

Just as in a former day, under the onset of the Rumanian invaders, Ukrainians from across the Dniester had found refuge on the banks of the Dnieper, so now, under the onset of the fascist subjugators, Ukrainians from the Dnieper country found refuge on the Volga. We were received there with open arms.

Russia—our Russian elder brother! What would have become of our kolkhoz and of our whole Ukrainian Republic if it had not been for you?...

My family settled for the time in the *Karl Liebknecht* collective in the Saratov Region. We were given a house and a stock of food.

Naturally, we were anxious to do our bit. I went to work right away as carpenter and cooper in the kolkhoz workshops. Afterwards, when the smith took ill, I shifted to the smithy.

The following autumn I was elected chairman. The collective was a big one, with a lot of land—5,500 hectares.

I was summoned to the Party District Committee and told:

"Corn means as much just now as tanks and

shells. It's vital to put all the land under the plough and produce a bumper crop."

"Done it shall be," I replied.

Twenty Ukrainian families besides my own had come to this kolkhoz. They worked well too, gratefully repaying the brotherly help given them.

The *Karl Liebknecht* had a large pig farm with eighty sows, and my wife went to work there. She did very well and after a time was put in charge of the farm.

Marusya learned to run a tractor. For her good work she received a certificate of merit from the Saratov Regional Party Committee, which she treasures as a precious relic.

My younger son Vasili went to school in the winter—he was in the sixth class—and in the summer he worked too, helping on the farm. My elder boy, Vladimir, who was seventeen when the war broke out, was in the army. For a long time, nearly eighteen months, we had no news of him. But vast as our country is, he did not go lost in it.

One evening at the end of 1942, I was sitting at home reading the newspaper. My wife was sewing. The children were out: Marusya on duty at the Village Soviet, and Vasili running about somewhere.

The wind howled furiously in the steppe and rattled the windowpanes as though demand-

ing admittance. Bending over her sewing, my wife would sigh—a mother always remains a mother:

“Where may our Vladimir be now? Is he alive and well, I wonder? And if he is, what is he doing? Lying in a foxhole somewhere, or going out on patrol. . . .”

All of a sudden the door burst open, and in rushed Marusya, pink with cold and excitement:

“A letter from Vladimir!”

It was a very happy letter. Our boy wrote that he had been to an army training school and was now an officer. He hadn’t seen any fighting yet, but was very keen to get to the front. This was just at the time of the German debacle at Stalingrad, and Vladimir was eager to be pressing on, to the west.

On, to the west! There lay the Ukraine and our *Gains of October*, the object of our thoughts, our dreams.

MAJOR DIETRICH’S ESTATE

We devoured every article, every newspaper item, however brief, which told of happenings in the Ukraine.

We rejoiced when we read about the glorious exploits of our partisan fighters, and clenched our fists in fury on learning that a new landlord had installed himself in some kolkhoz.

I shall always remember a letter to a Nazi officer from his "grateful Else," which was found on the officer's body and was published in our press.

"Dear Fritz," it said. "Herr Reschmer's son has already got himself an estate of fifteen hundred hectares. In a beautiful locality in the Carpathian foothills. I somehow think Podoliya would be nice. Maybe we could make our little nest there, or if not, then near Kiev or perhaps Poltava. I hope our estate will be equally large."

Can it be, we thought, that some Nazi landlord has planted himself in our kolkhoz too? Our thoughts flew home and hovered like birds over the Gorniy Tikich and Kozachenkova Balka.

Here is what we found out afterwards. When the front line receded to the Dnieper, an oppressive silence descended upon the *Gains of October*. Everything seemed dead. What people remained there dragged themselves miserably about.

And in the fields around, the corn stood over-ripe, the glorious wheat shed its grain on the ground, and the sugar-beet plantations grew rank with weeds.

What was to be done? It made people's hearts ache to see the corn go to waste. Looking furtively about them, they went out one by one into the fields.

The ricks clustered close, one by the other. But the farmers felt no pleasure at the sight. For

the first time in their lives, they were not pleased at a plentiful harvest.

Old man Prilipko cut the grain a day, cut it another, then he put his scythe away and told his wife Oksana:

"That's enough! We've cut a little bit, and that's as much as we're going to."

The fields grew deserted. Reap them? For whom? For the Nazis who were firing at their sons, husbands, grandsons fighting somewhere on the Dnieper?

The Nazis came. With them was a local German resident named Katke. They slaughtered some pigs, chickens and ducks, took a store of honey and wine, and went off. Then Katke returned with a whip dangling on his wrist. He called everyone together and told them:

"I'm your elder. From now on you're not a kolkhoz any more, you're... well, we'll see about that later on. And now go and get that grain in."

He gave a crack of his whip, and that was the end of the meeting.

The front receded further and further. There were no newspapers, no radio, no electricity. A black, black night had enveloped everything, and the one thought in people's minds was when this terrible time would be over.

Katke bossed everything, and everybody expected he would be the landlord here. But it

proved otherwise. One day the villagers saw a whole squad of Germans arriving. Among them was some important officer: the rest were all very respectful to him.

The officer walked through the house and orchard, inspected the farm buildings, the beehives, the pond and the cottages, and said:

“Gut, sehr gut.”

The Germans drove off. Katke saw them as far as the gate, then he came back and announced:

“Well, now you have a master!”

A few days later the “master” came again, bringing his suitcases and a young woman interpreter, and picked out the six best rooms in the second storey to live in. He had two armed policemen for a bodyguard.

This was Major Dietrich, retired, of the German army. For his “special services” to fascist Germany, Hitler had given him the highest decoration—the Iron Cross with oaken wreath—and the pick of any estate in the Ukraine. And so Major Dietrich became lord and master of our kolkhoz property.

When he first made his appearance, this new-fledged landlord was a thin creature, with a bluish look about the gills. After two months, though, he was fat and round and red-faced. His interpreter, who also did duty as a makeshift wife, put on flesh as well.

To his lawful spouse in Germany Dietrich sent frequent parcels of bacon, sausage, butter, geese, chickens, eggs, honey, sugar, dried fruit and all manner of other good things.

Eventually this lord of the manor decided to build himself a villa. He had already picked the site for it. Evidently he meant to bring his wife there too. Though until then he had contrived to have a pretty good time with the young interpreter, going off with her to Talnoye or Uman on pleasure jaunts that lasted for days at a time. He'd receive company at home also.

The farm was run by Katke. He too wallowed in luxury and got as fat as a pig.

The collective farmers were so much cattle in Dietrich's and Katke's eyes. If anybody was late for work, the policemen with their whips were sent after him.

The first winter the villagers still had some food—the grain they had cut and threshed for themselves in the summer of 1941.

But afterwards Katke got his clutches on everything, and all he ever gave our people—and little enough of that—was millet flour, pigs' and calves' guts and the thinnest of buttermilk.

It was only hope that kept people going.

The Germans might brag about their victories, but the truth about the position on the battle fronts found its way to Talnoye too.

Several times, fires broke out in the fields.

The wheat was destroyed on the stalk, and all Katke's efforts to find the culprits proved of no avail. The people were resisting the fascist invader. They remembered what Stalin, our great leader, had said—that victory would be ours.

They firmly believed that the fascist night would pass and glorious daylight come again.

HOME TO THE UKRAINE

September 10, 1943, was a very happy day for me. I got a telegram from Saratov saying:

"Report immediately to Regional Party Committee for despatch to Ukraine."

All of the Ukraine east of the Dnieper had been liberated by this time. Our troops were on the Dnieper line, getting ready to press on further.

Kiev was still in enemy hands, and the Kiev Regional Party Committee had made its headquarters in Gogolevo village, in the district of Brovary. I was received by the Regional Secretary, Comrade Serdyuk.

While we were talking, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov walked in. Besides being on the Military Council of the First Ukrainian Front, he gave much time to problems of the rehabilitation of the Nazi-devastated areas.

Comrade Khrushchov recognized me and asked where they were thinking of sending me.

"To the Regional Land Board," the Regional Secretary replied. "Let him work there until Talnoye has been freed."

"Quite right," Nikita Sergeyevich approved.

At the Land Board, I was put in charge of the auxiliary establishments that had been set up to serve the needs of the farms in the liberated parts of the region. Afterwards, when our troops had freed Kiev, I organized similar establishments on the other side of the Dnieper.

My wife joined me soon after, while my daughter remained in the Saratov Region for another year. She was driving a tractor, as before. Vasili joined the army.

At the end of February 1944, after the liberation of Zvenigorodka, I was summoned to the Regional Party Committee again.

"It won't be long now before Talnoye is free. We want you to set out for it immediately, following in the wake of the army."

"I'm desperately anxious to myself," I answered, overjoyed. "I'll walk there if necessary."

"Fine. Here's your assignment."

I ran my eye over the paper. It said that I was being appointed chairman of the Executive of the Talnoye District Soviet.

I was so eager to get to my kolkhoz, and here. . . .

"I'm obliged for the honour. . ." I started saying, but the Personnel Secretary wouldn't even listen.

"We know you don't like sitting in offices, but you'll have to for a while. Where do you think we can get the people we need? You don't expect us to withdraw them from the front, do you?"

And it was a fact that forces were very scarce. Besides myself and my wife, MTS director Polishchuk was being sent to Talnoye, and the three of us were to set up the local authorities, get the MTS and the collective farms going again and start preparations for the sowing right away.

I asked to be made only Acting Chairman of the District Executive. There was more hope that way of getting back to my *Gains of October*.

We set out the same day, with knapsacks on our backs and staffs in our hands. Sometimes we travelled in lorries or carts with Red Army men, at other times we moved on foot.

I remember a conversation I had with one artillery sergeant. Taking leave of us where our ways parted, he said:

"We'll be seeing you soon, Pa. Hurry up and set things to rights here, and have pies and buns ready for us when we come back from Berlin...."

Overnight we would stop in the villages, and we took the opportunity to find out what the various kolkhozes looked like after the occupation. One place we stayed at was the long-famed *Shevchenko* collective, where my old friend Yakov Ivanchenko had been chairman. He had not returned yet from evacuation.

Before the war, this collective had had 150 horses, 30 pairs of oxen, 70 cows and 300 pigs, and seven tractors had worked its fields. Now there were 35 miserable jades, two cows, and one sow. That was all that was left of the once prosperous farm.

And what were things like, I wondered, at our *Gains of October*? Had it escaped, or was it a burnt wreck, and the slope above Kozachenkova Balka bare and empty as it had been in 1922?

When we reached the outlying villages of the Talnoye District, the same melancholy picture met our eyes: the barns and cattle houses empty, the fields choked with weeds.

But the spirit everywhere was cheerful and confident.

"As long as we've got Soviet power back," people said, "the cornbins and cattle houses will soon be full again."

"Heard anything about the *Gains of October*?" I wanted to know. "Is it still standing?"

"It was, but there's no telling now...."

Talnoye was freed on the 8th of March, and the morning of the 9th already saw us there.

There wasn't a soul in the streets, people were still hiding in the cellars. The Post Office building in the middle of the place was on fire.

I got people together without losing a moment, and by our concerted efforts we put out the

flames. Fairly soon I found suitable premises for the District Executive.

Soviet power in Talnoye had begun to function again.

STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN

And there I was, treading the familiar road that led to the *Gains of October*. Quite a few from our kolkhoz were with me—women, old folk, youngsters. Our people had heard several days before that I was in the vicinity, and had been waiting impatiently for me to arrive. And on discovering that I was already in Talnoye, a regular delegation had come to call me to the *Gains of October*—to call me “home,” as they said.

I was touched by their marks of affection. They believed in their kolkhoz, believed that the *Gains of October* would flourish once more and again come to be what it had been before the war.

There was Kozachenkova Balka and the dear, familiar homestead above it, so familiar that it clutched at your heart. The same white house visible from afar, the same windmill, the same farm structures.

Outwardly all was intact. But inside, desolation reigned. Dietrich had carried off everything he could when he pulled out.

Nor did our pond gladden the eye: the spring floods of 1943 had destroyed it. The leafy willows at its edge had disappeared too.

Nine hectares of orchard were gone. The vineyard, wanting proper care, had been killed by frost.

People had forgotten what it was like to have electricity, a piped water supply, bathhouses, automatic drinking fixtures in the cattle sheds. The smaller children did not know the meaning of newspapers, radios, films. Even an ordinary flour mill was lacking, and people ground what corn they had by hand.

Young and old came out to meet us. I actually felt uncomfortable at having such a fuss made of me. But people welcomed me from the bottom of their hearts, they were truly glad. With me, as a Party member, they identified their hopes of a better life. They were confident that that life would come again.

We didn't have to call any meeting, everybody in the place had gathered as it was. Nikita Konfedrat, who had returned the day before, asked everyone to step into the clubhouse. He looked drawn and old, but was cheerful and smiled all the time.

"And so, comrades," he began, "it's just as our father Stalin said it would be. In a word, the *Gains of October* lives on. Allow me to open the meeting. . . ."

A management board was elected then and there. I was chosen chairman, and Konfedrat my assistant.

The board met right after the general meeting. There was not a day to waste, for spring was already in the air.

Most of my time was taken up by my duties at the District Executive. It was only at night or early in the morning that I could snatch an hour or two for the kolkhoz.

We were having to start all over again. We had no horses, and not enough implements or seed. But we had what was most vital—the Soviets, which at once came to the rescue, supplying the collectives with tractors and seed; and we were Soviet men and women with many years of kolkhoz experience, and were determined to get the collectives going again in the shortest possible time.

That very first spring after Talnoye District was freed, 20 tractors were at work in its fields. Our collective was supplied with eight horses. People put their cows to draw harrows and light ploughs. Spades were not forgotten either.

People worked day and night without any urging. Everybody knew that we must plant as much as we possibly could. Life itself was teaching them: to keep the enemy out for good, we must provide grain for the army; to obtain machinery, we must provide grain for the towns.

A constant source of inspiration was the victories of our army, in which our sons and brothers, husbands and grandsons were fighting.

Once again, socialist emulation became the driving force. Team vied with team, kolkhoz with kolkhoz.

Our closest neighbour is the *Voroshilov* collective in the village of Glybochek. It is headed by an old, practised husbandman, Ivan Remenets.

Going down the road one day, I saw Remenets walking about our fields, taking a good look at everything, talking to the people. I went up and asked:

"What are you looking for, old man?"

"Ideas, methods," he told me. "I'm hoping to pick up a thing or two from you."

"Picked up anything yet?"

He laughed.

"Well, yes, I have, but it's heavyish, I doubt if I'll be able to carry it. You've already got tip-top order and discipline. I still have to remind some of my folk to do their work properly."

A few days later, Remenets came over with a delegation of his members, including the team foremen.

"We've come in a body to fetch away your methods," he said. "Between us we'll be able to carry them."

That was the beginning of an emulation contest between our two farms which continues to this day. We sign an agreement every year and go several times a year to check up on each other's results.

Later in the spring, the post of District Executive chairman was filled, and that made things easier for me: I could give more time now to my kolkhoz.

Soon after, bookkeeper Voloshenyuk, Makar Gotsik and other of our members returned from evacuation, and that made a big difference too.

We were not counting on a big harvest, because the land had run to weed and we had not had the wherewithal to work it properly. But we were lucky in that year's spring, there were plentiful warm rains in May and June, and the crop turned out quite a decent one.

How were we to get it harvested and threshed? Before the war, we had had three oil engines, now they were out of commission, and the reapers and threshers were out of order too. However, we contrived to repair one of the reapers, and afterwards a thresher as well. Scythes and sickles helped out the reaper, the moon did duty when the sun was down.

We had no thought of rest or holidays.

"An hour in the harvest is worth a million!" bookkeeper Voloshenyuk would say.

And we were the first in the district to get the harvest home—and also the first to complete the threshing, fulfil our grain deliveries, put in our winter crops, dig up our beets, and start ploughing for the spring.

Towards the end of the summer I managed to get myself released altogether from the District Executive and could give all my attention to the farm. I made it my target to bring back our pre-war prosperity within the next two or three years.

Came the last winter of the war. It was a very black one for my wife and myself. On October 7, 1944, my son, Junior Sergeant Vasili Dubkovetsky, died the death of the brave in action against the Nazi invaders. And my other son, Lieutenant Vladimir Dubkovetsky, was killed on the Oder on February 10, 1945.

DAWN OF A GLORIOUS DAY

Curses on the head of the warmongers—dead, and living, and any that may come after! Shame eternal upon their names!

The war destroyed my work of nineteen years. The war brought untold suffering upon me and the others in our kolkhoz. The war robbed me of my sons.

But on Victory Day I felt very happy. This day marked the end of the war. It restored sons to other fathers and mothers, gave wives back their husbands, and girls their sweethearts.

For all upright men and women in the world, it was the dawn of a glorious new day.

The fine people of the *Gains of October* began to return to it. Some of them had joined the

Party in this time. We again formed a kolkhoz Party organization, with war veteran Leonid Boiko as secretary, and a Komsomol organization, headed by war veteran Alexei Sviridyuk.

Contrary to the forecasts of the bourgeois press hacks, who predicted that, having seen the way of life abroad, our men would want to introduce it in our own country, the demobilized servicemen put all their hearts into building up the kolkhoz.

Veteran Onufri Mamalyga set to work at once to re-establish our repair shop. Veteran Trofim Lisovoy got the smithy working within a week. Our other war veterans became team foremen, tractor drivers, enginemen, turners, fitters, electricians, carpenters, lorry drivers.

In the course of the first postwar summer we repaired by our own unaided efforts all our seed drills, reapers, cultivators and engines, and rebuilt some of the farm structures, the flour mill, the oil press and the dynamo. One of the engines was set to drive the mill, the chaff-cutter and the root slicer, another powered the dynamo.

By the autumn, there was electric light in our homes, in the clubhouse, the cowshed and the stable, and electricity was driving the turning and drilling lathes in the repair shop.

We reaped a very fair harvest—the grain came to fifteen centners per hectare. Most of the

spring crop area had been ploughed in the autumn, though it had cost a big effort.

The fruit and vegetable crop was also good. Makar Gotsik started making wine again. As regards bees, we already had eighty hives.

Our livestock farms did well too. We had acquired ten cows and six sows in 1944 and made contracts with our members to sell us their young heifers; and by the end of 1945, the kolkhoz already had the requisite minimum of cows and sows in proportion to its land area. All we lacked was sheep and poultry.

1945 was indeed the dawning of a glorious new day for us. We were recovering rapidly. Once again people spoke of the *Gains of October* as a front-rank collective.

That autumn I worked on the commission which drafted the government decision on the building of homes for collective farmers. Other kolkhoz chairmen on the commission were Kuznetsov of the *Lenin* collective near Dniepropetrovsk and Melnik of the *Woodland Clearing* in the Zhitomir Region.

When the draft was ready, we were received by Comrade Khrushchov. As was always his way, he took an interest in everything and went into the minutest details.

The discussion got onto the subject of gardens around the houses, of planting more trees and shrubs in the villages and along the roads.

Knowing that I was very strong for this sort of thing, Nikita Sergeyevich asked:

"And what do you say, Comrade Dubkovetsky?"

"Well, what I say is this," I answered. "Planting trees is an excellent thing. Both pretty and useful. But the trouble is that often we don't do it right."

"Yes?" Nikita Sergeyevich encouraged me.

"We plant a lot. Every spring and every autumn. If even half of what we planted had survived, we would be living in one big garden by now." Everybody laughed. "In a word," I wound up, "trees should be planted, but they should be looked after too. There ought to be a law punishing people who destroy them."

A little later, I was asked to sit on a commission, headed by the late Vasili Fyodorovich Starchenko, formed to draft a decision on standard types of wagons and carts for the collective farms. A display of designs and models of such vehicles was arranged.

Comrade Khrushchov received this commission too. I sat there looking at him and wondering: how did he find the time for a detail like wagons? Compared to the important matters of Party and state that he had to deal with, a wagon seemed a trifle to me.

But when I thought over what Nikita Sergeyevich said on this occasion, I realized that a wag-

on was not a trifle at all, but a very important cog in the big economic machine. I might look down my nose at a mere wagon, because our kolkhoz already had three lorries by this time. But what about other collectives? It would happen that their beets got left out in the fields in winter because they couldn't be carted away; they used inferior seed sometimes for lack of vehicles to bring selected seed; and their grain deliveries would drag until the New Year because there were not enough lorries and wagons.

And so, wagons for the collective farms were a pressing need.

Nor was it only the work Comrade Khrushchov was concerned about—he was concerned for the kolkhoz chairman too. How was the kolkhoz chairman getting about now? In a bumpy cart at best, and as often as not on foot, trudging along with a stick.

“Whereas a kolkhoz chairman should have a comfortable and attractive vehicle to ride in,” Nikita Sergeyevich told us at the last. “And our industry can and must turn out such vehicles.”

THE WILL OF STALIN IS WITH US

In every man's life there are days that he will always remember, days that light up his way like lodestars.

I had two such wonderful days in 1946....

One of them was February 10. The sun shone with the brightness of springtime, and that was how I felt too. It was the day of the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and the working folk of the Uman Constituency elected me to represent them in the people's socialist parliament.

Did my father and mother ever think that their Fyodor would figure in public life? They would have counted themselves lucky to see me a clerk in the village office!

Did I myself, a propertyless farm hand on the manor estate, ever imagine that I would become a legislator?

My thoughts flew to Moscow, to Red Square, where Lenin lies at rest in his tomb. It was him that I had to thank!

I pictured the Kremlin, Red Square thronged with people, and Stalin standing on the platform of the Lenin Mausoleum. It was him that I had to thank! It is to our Party, to Lenin, to Stalin, to the people that I owe everything!

Up to then, I had only seen Stalin in portraits. And the day when I saw him in real life, at close quarters, was my second wonderful day.

I was in the Kremlin, for the first time in my life. That in itself moved me deeply.

The deputies from the Ukraine occupied the front rows, and we from the Kiev Region were in the very centre of them. I sat with my eyes

fixed on the platform where the members of the Government had their seats. And now Stalin appeared there.

What with the emotion that filled me, with the tears that welled in my eyes, I could at first make out only the general outline of that dear face.

He stood quite near, straight in front of me, and applauded us all. And we applauded him. Loudly, enthusiastically, from the bottom of our hearts.

The first session of the Supreme Soviet considered and approved the law on the postwar five-year plan, covering the years 1946-50, for the economic rehabilitation and development of our country.

The main features of this plan our people already knew from Comrade Stalin's speech of February 9 to the voters of the Stalin Constituency of Moscow. Now we, the people's envoys, were to hear in detail what he had mapped out and approve the program for each branch of the national economy and for each individual Soviet republic.

Comrade Stalin did not speak at the session. But his ideas, his will, were to be felt in every section of the five-year plan.

Listening to the draft of the plan, I thought hard: "What must our kolkhoz do to make its contribution to the great work of building com-

munism?" And I came to see that the *Gains of October* must also have its five-year plan of development.

I realized: as a deputy, a servant of the people, I must now work still more, still harder, still better.

BIRTH OF A COLLECTIVE FARM'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN

It was the spring of 1946.

The Gorny Tikich swelled, broke up the softening ice and carried it downstream.

I stood long on the steep bank, gazing down at the rushing torrent, as if this were the first time I saw it.

"You haven't much longer to flow in idleness, old fellow. Soon we'll harness you, dress you in concrete, make you work for the good of man."

The dream I had cherished for nearly a quarter of a century was about to come true. The Party organization had approved my idea, and it had met with an enthusiastic reception from the kolkhoz management board, whose meeting, I might mention in passing, had been attended by nearly half the kolkhoz membership.

Addressing that meeting, I spoke eagerly of all that the scheme would mean to us.

"For years and years," I said, "our Tikich has been flowing without its power doing any good. But now we're going to put an end to this

wastefulness. We'll build a dam, send the water along a canal, make it turn turbines. The turbines will drive generators and give us power for next to nothing, to send wherever we choose. Electricity will power the threshers and winnowers and seed-sorters, the flour mill and the hulling mill, the oil and wine presses, the curing shop machinery, the sawmill and the repair shops. And later on we'll make it do our ploughing and watering, baking and milking and shearing, and even our washing and ironing."

The meeting took place one evening, by the light from our little dynamo. As if to spite us, the engine that powered it was misbehaving, so that the light kept flickering.

Our people did not take much persuading. Quite a few of them had seen the Korsun and Bug hydroelectric stations and they were very eager to have one of our own.

And so the hydroelectric plant was made the first item in the draft of our kolkhoz five-year plan. The second item was cultivation methods. Agronomist Ivan Belous introduced the subject:

"I conceive of our farm in the future as one with intensive cultivation, diversified crops and well-developed animal husbandry. The seven-field system we had before the war isn't good enough any more. I propose going over to nine-field rotation. It will give us the best basis for raising yields and expanding our cattle farming."

He opened his folder and showed us rotation charts, tables of agrotechnical measures for the different years, figures of the additional equipment to be acquired, schedules for manuring, for laying in stocks of mineral fertilizer and so on.

"By the end of the five years, when we've done all this," he concluded, "we'll be bringing in 24 centners of grain, 300 of sugar beet, and 33 of hay per hectare."

Other speakers did not have it all so neatly figured out, perhaps, but you could feel that everybody was keen on the idea of a five-year plan for the kolkhoz.

"If we are to talk of high yields of produce from our animals, we must first of all get more pedigree stock," said breeding expert Leonid Boiko. "Then, too, we must put in automatic drinking taps in the cowsheds, as we had before the war, and build a creamery, otherwise what will we do with the milk? We need a sheepcot, too, and a poultry house. . . ."

"And a new pen," added pig-tender Yefrosinia Chuban, "because the old one isn't warm enough for the piglets."

Makar Gotsik said we must put more ground under fruit-trees that very year, bring up the number of beehives to 200 and lay out a twelve-hectare vineyard.

Yemelian Tonkovid, who was in charge of our vegetable raising, dwelt on the virtues of

growing vegetables under glass and urged that the number of frames should be doubled; and also that, until we had carried out our hydroelectric project, other, if more primitive, arrangements must be made for watering the truck gardens.

"And what about the pond, why doesn't anybody speak about that?" came the voice of Vasili Gaishuk, who used to be our fish breeder, but after the war had had to switch to keeping records of work done. "When are we going to have a pond again? For one thing, it means fish, and in general, it's great to have a pond. There'd be swimming and boating.... Be sure to put it down in the plan."

"It's down," said bookkeeper Voloshenyuk, who was sitting next to the secretary of the meeting.

"And say to build it soon. To start right this spring...."

Our building crew, headed by Grigori Vlasenko, had also mapped out some ambitious plans.

"We've got to finish our street, haven't we? Everybody'll tell you that we have. And don't we need a summer club? Certainly we do. And as to a new bathhouse and new premises for the nursery school, that goes without saying."

"A summer club can wait, we've got a winter one, but what we do need right now is a garage,"

chauffeur Ivan Kovalchuk put in gruffly. "You can see yourselves where we have to keep our lorries."

Onufri Mamalyga, our turner, declared that we should build a new workshop. Boiko urged that the creamery must have a refrigerator plant. This reminded Tonkovid that a vegetable storehouse was essential, while field-team foreman Yakov Chuban added that we simply must put up a threshing barn; doing the threshing in the open was terribly inconvenient.

Alexei Sviridyuk, who ran our club, could hardly wait his turn to speak. Hotly, with all the eagerness of youth, he argued:

"Expanding the farm is a good thing, of course, and nobody is going to object to it. But what about cultural activities? We must plan both for prosperity and for entertainment. I propose that as soon as possible we should buy a film projector of our own, a piano and instruments for a brass band, and install a local radio relay station. . . ."

It was good to listen to them all. If people were so enthusiastic about the plans, it meant they would fulfil them. The only thing was to give them the help they needed and direct their efforts along the right lines.

Of course, the thing would take some doing, particularly in the matter of funds. According to rough estimates, the hydroelectric plant alone

would cost a good round sum—close to a million rubles. For we did not intend to have some small affair, but a substantial 400 kw. station. Something like 300,000 rubles would already be needed for it in 1946. And there were all the other items besides.

We had 280,000 rubles set aside for building purposes. That meant we had to raise another 100 or 150 thousand. I suggested selling the wheat we kept as a reserve. To tell the truth, I was rather apprehensive that people's enthusiasm might cool when they heard this proposal. But I need not have feared. Neither at the board meeting nor at the general meeting of the collective were any objections raised.

Our members realized that every ruble invested in construction work would be repaid with interest within a year or two.

UNFORESEEN OBSTACLES

Our orchard stood covered with blossom. The willow trees were green. Larks sang in the springtime sky.

On one such lovely day, engineers came to the *Gains of October* from the Rural Electric Projects Office in Kiev, and I went down with them to the Gorny Tikich—not just to dream, as I had done for so many years, but to turn my dream into a reality.

The engineers did their surveying, wrote down all our requirements and went back to Kiev to draw up the plans for the hydroelectric plant. They promised to do it in double-quick time.

Oh, that Electric Projects Office! How much good it does—but how much bother one has with it! It was a year before the final variant of the plans was ready.

In the meantime, though, we got individual blueprints out of the Electric Projects people and started on the preliminary operations.

We did everything ourselves, except that we engaged a hydraulic engineer for three months as consultant.

There was the supply canal to be dug, the foundation of the station house to be laid, the turbine chambers to be constructed. The digging and shovelling called for a lot of labour. But that did not require skilled men: anyone could do it.

Laying the foundation was more of a problem. We did not have skilled bricklayers of our own, and hiring them was an expensive proposition. But here we had a stroke of luck.

One day just at this time, an apparent stranger sought me out, shook hands, then asked:

“Remember me, Fyodor?”

His face looked familiar, but still I couldn't place him.

“Think back to 1919, Fyodor,” he went on.

"Vinnitsa, Letichev, fighting the Petlyurovites. Then Kiev, Chernigov, and Kiev again. . . ."

"You're Ganyuchenko? Old Gerasim?" I recognized him now. "What fortunes bring you here?"

Telling his story would take too long. I will only say that the war had left him without home or family, and on hearing that I was chairman of the *Gains of October*, he had decided to apply for admission to it.

"Know any trade?" I enquired cautiously.

"I'm a bricklayer," he answered.

Just what we wanted! And a very competent bricklayer, as it proved. He got a crew together right away and set to work on the foundation.

This was no easy job. There was water in the pit, they had to pump it out, and sometimes stand up to their waist in it. But Ganyuchenko and his mates worked with real devotion. Some days they put down four and five cubic metres of foundation, when the quota was only one.

That autumn the preliminary work on our power plant was completed. The initial difficulties had been overcome. But what did they count for, these difficulties, compared with those that came after!

The Number One item in any power station is, of course, the turbines. Ours was to have two of them. We had the designs all ready, but the plant to which we sent our order wrote back that

they would cost 360,000 rubles. This was an awful lot of money.

And into the bargain, the summer proved a drouhty one. Who doesn't remember that summer of 1946? Beginning with April and right up to harvest time, not a drop of rain fell on our fields. The sun scorched unmercifully. The earth cracked, the corn drooped, the beets wilted.

It was our salvation that our winter crops had been planted on early-ploughed fallow and the spring crop area autumn-ploughed—that our women and girls, agronomist Belous, team foremen Chuban and Tonkovid were out day and night, breaking the crust, applying supplementary fertilizer, watering the vegetables. In the old days of individual farming, a drought like that would have burnt everything to a cinder. Whereas we were able to wrest from ungracious Nature ten centners of grain per hectare and 110 of sugar beet. Our yield was double the average for the district.

In livestock farming, we didn't do so badly either. The year's milk yield per cow was 1,490 litres, though our herd of 26 was a motley, non-pedigree one. Dairymaids Marina Vronskaya and Yarina Belous received 660 litres of milk each as extra pay for exceeding the milk production plan. Pig-tenders Yefrosinia Chuban and Ganna Oliinik reared 120 pigs, and each received three piglets as extra pay.

We were the first in the district to complete the grain deliveries, and our milk, egg and wool deliveries to the state were also made on schedule. As to meat, we turned in sufficient to cover the next year's delivery plan as well, and even sent in 16 centners on account of the plan for 1948.

For exceeding our plan of hide deliveries, we were supplied with high-grade leather for 100 pairs of boots. A pair of boots cost us only 28 rubles.

Still, that drought clipped our wings a bit. We did not get the returns we had been counting on. And the hydroelectric project had been launched, and 360,000 rubles had to be paid out for the turbines. . . .

But no one had any thought of giving up the construction job. The funds would simply have to be raised somehow. We began making sausage and sold our meat in that form, which brought in more. Our workshops started taking outside orders. The flour mill, oil press and hulling mill, which we had rebuilt by now, were also yielding returns.

The thing was to institute the most rigid economy, to husband every pound of corn and every ruble. But what would our membership have to say about that?

The question was discussed by the kolkhoz

Party organization, and then by a general meeting of the kolkhoz members.

That meeting is one I shall never forget. The matter stood as follows: either we issue only 700 grams of corn and 3 rubles 80 in cash per work-day unit and go on with the project, or... But the meeting wouldn't even hear of any other alternative. The sole objector was Nikolai Trofimov, a young fellow who had only joined us since the war.

"A power plant is a fine thing, of course," he said, "but it'll be a long time before we get anything out of it. And what we need is returns now, particularly with the poor crop we've had..."

You should have heard how the rest reacted to that. They called Trofimov a moneygrubber, a self-seeker, a scrounger, and condemned his anti-collective attitude in no uncertain terms. Some even demanded his expulsion. Our members believed implicitly in their kolkhoz and its strength.

And their faith proved justified. Everyone received sufficient grain, for each member had some 400 workday units to his credit. We did not even have to avail ourselves of the food grants that the Government issued in the spring.

During the spring sowing, we arranged communal meals (150 centners of grain went for this purpose). In addition, every member could get meat, sausage, butter, oil and vegetables at cost price.

Our membership were for the power project heart and soul. We must get it built, no matter what happened!

THE FORCE THAT ASSURES SUCCESS

We were now in 1947.

The beginning of it saw an event of great moment in the country's life. In February, the Central Committee of the Party held the plenary session which adopted the historic decision on measures for the postwar advancement of agriculture.

Together with other farmers, I took part in the session proceedings.

Before they opened, Comrade Malenkov asked us to his office at the Central Committee headquarters. There were fifteen of us there: ten kolhoz chairmen, two MTS directors, the head of a district Agricultural Board, a field team foreman and a section leader.

Comrade Malenkov handed each of us a copy of the decision as drafted and asked us to study it and make our comments.

"Tell the session about everything that hinders our progress," he said. "Speak of it frankly and openly."

Of our group, speeches were made at the session by Ferapont Golovaty, the well-known kolhoz chairman from the Saratov Region, by a

chairman of a Siberian kolkhoz and by a team foreman from the Krasnodar Region. I was deeply impressed by the fact that the Central Committee of the Party had asked us, ordinary men and women of the collective farms, to come and tell it our views.

This session brought home to me with renewed force how immense is the responsibility that rests upon us Party members working in the collectives. On my return to the *Gains of October*, I reported at a meeting of our Party organization, and it was decided there to review the work of every Party member in the light of the session decisions, to see whether he had been given enough to do, and of the kind he could do best.

Let me try to reconstruct that meeting.

An airy, well-kept room in our clubhouse. The banner of our collective on the wall over the table. Standing in the corners, the challenge banners we had won several years in succession, and hanging in glassed-in frames, our certificates from the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition—tokens of our prewar renown.

There were nine of us: eight members of the Party and one probationary member.

Sitting next to me was the Party secretary, Leonid Boiko, our college-trained breeding expert. He had already brought the numbers of our livestock above the minimum required by the

amount of land we had. But the animals were not pedigree ones and their productivity was low. The meeting instructed Boiko to speed up the process of replacing them by better stock and achieve the prewar productivity figures at an early date.

Next to the wall sat Ivan Stepanenko. He was one of our chauffeurs, but whenever his lorry stood idle, he went himself to look for jobs that needed doing, and never refused work of any kind. Stepanenko had shown himself to be very capable and enterprising, and after observing him for quite a while, I had come to feel that he would make me a good assistant.

Peering out from behind Stepanenko was Yemelian Tonkovid. An orphan brought up in the kolkhoz, he was now our head vegetable grower. He coped well with the job, but we needed trained personnel for the power station, and I suggested sending him to classes for electricians.

Straight opposite me was Ivan Churpita, our fodder chief. Bad as the previous year had been, he had contrived to provide all the fodder needed not only for the kolkhoz livestock, but for our members' individually-owned animals as well. The meeting felt that he could be assigned some further duties, and that it would be a good idea to put him in charge of all the valuable building materials and the fuel for our motor vehicles and engines. A keen eye and a thrifty hand were wanted here.

Then it was my wife's turn. After our return to Talnoye, she had headed the District Health Board for a time, and later had been moved to a post in the District Executive.

Now she got up and said:

"I want to work in the fields again, not in an office. I'd like to be a section leader once more."

A little further on sat a newcomer to our collective, Boris Skibitsky, an airman discharged from the army a short time before.

"I'm a fairly good mechanic," he said, "and I like working with machinery and electricity; give me whatever job you think I'll be most use in."

Mikhail Voloshenyuk, our bookkeeper, and Alexandra Ivanova, a rank-and-file member of the kolkhoz, were also working well in their respective jobs.

But I am not given to over-praising people, particularly Party members, and at this meeting I talked less of what they had accomplished than of what they still had to accomplish.

Outside, the sun shone bright, and it was thawing already. In a month, maybe even less, it would be time to start work in the fields; and on the Tikich construction job too, there would be much to do.

Displayed prominently in the clubhouse was a bulletin board headed: "*Gains of October Five-Year Plan.*" Listed on it were the various targets we had set ourselves.

In the "Done" column there was so far only an entry reading: "Two houses and fertilizer shed erected."

By the autumn we had to be able to enter in this column that we had again reached the pre-war figures of crop yields, put the first unit of the hydroelectric plant into commission, built a new machine shop, four dwelling houses, a six-vehicle garage, a sheepcot, and a number of other things.

This year, 1947, was to be a year of rapid advance.

And it was up to the Party organization to assure the success of all these plans.

A BIG JOB GETS GOING

We decided to build the turbines for the power station ourselves.

Living in the village of Palanochka, in the Mankovka District, was Vyacheslav Iosifovich Scheffel, a 68-year-old mechanic who was now on a pension. He was of Czech stock, but had been born in the Ukraine and had lived there all his life. He had always worked on diesel engines and was far-famed as a master craftsman.

I had known him for a long time, and now I drove over in our little GAZ car, told him what we wanted and asked him to help.

"You're our one hope, Vyacheslav Iosifovich."

He heard what I had to say, then shook his grey head doubtfully:

"It's a tall order."

"I know that, but it's got to be done."

"I'm an old man, I won't be able to cope. And anyway, where do you expect to do the work, and where will you get the material? Making a turbine isn't like patching up some diesel; you know."

"And two turbines, not just one. Two hundred or two hundred and fifty kilowatts apiece."

"What, what?" he queried, opening his eyes; he had thought I meant a little turbine of some forty or fifty kilowatts.

Well, to make a long story short, he would not agree, and I went away without accomplishing my errand.

We racked and racked our brains. If we ordered the turbines at the factory, they would eat up all our money and we'd have to give up the other construction items. And how could we give them up? They were part of our five-year plan! No, no, we absolutely must make the turbines ourselves! And once again I tackled Scheffel.

This time the old man proved more conversable. He told me afterwards that he had been turning my proposal over and over in his mind, and it had fired his imagination.

"Let's have another look at those blueprints of yours, Fyodor Ivanovich."

He proned over them, smacking his lips and shaking his head. He would take fire, then look rueful again:

"A hundred and twenty centimetres in diameter! A monster of a thing! How do you expect to machine it?"

"Once we have the material, we'll find a way to get it machined," I urged. "There's no fortress in the world that can't be captured."

After long reflection, Scheffel let himself be persuaded. With a stubborn shake of his head, he said:

"Very well. We'll try to capture this fortress of yours. . . ."

A few days later, I brought him over and put him up at my house. My family, incidentally, had increased by this time: Marusya had married our new member, ex-airman Boris Skibitsky.

As our first move towards making the turbines, we had to erect a new machine shop and collect the needful material. The little GAZ came in very handy here. I spent whole weeks in it sometimes, driving to Uman, to Zvenigorodka and to neighbouring distilleries, sugar refineries, state farms and machine and tractor stations and buying, bartering, borrowing or ordering everything we required for the work.

The new workshop, which we put up in one month, was equipped in due course with a turning lathe—our second—and an electric welding

outfit. The material we also got together little by little.

The shaft for the turbine I procured in a burnt-down textile mill, and the metal for the rotor we dismantled from wrecked tanks standing about in the fields and along the roads. The most difficult and important parts—the vanes and caps—we ordered at the *Trud* factory in Uman.

We made our rotors electric-welded, and on this job some very fine work was done by our smiths and fitters—Trofim Lisovoy, Andrei Melnik and Grytz Pershuk—and by welder Museichuk.

There still remained the problem of machining the rotor, 120 centimetres in diameter. Surely we weren't going to take it to Kiev!

With Scheffel at their head, our craftsmen—turner Onufri Mamalyga among them—found a way out of this predicament too. They made the lathe for the purpose themselves, also out of wrecked war equipment. For the guide bearing they used sections of a 155-mm. gun barrel, and the ball bearings came from a tank turret.

In general, we put the remains of war equipment, and various other scrap, to all manner of uses. The turbine chamber roofs were constructed out of the chassis of smashed-up lorries, while the floodgates and certain other things were made out of old combine parts. For the frames un-

der the first turbine we used some I-beams discovered in a burnt-out building in Talnoye. We brought them over and straightened them ourselves.

All this took plenty of work. Of course, it would have been easier to buy nice new I-beams, for example. But where was "the needful," as Konfedrat liked to call it, to come from? We had to keep down expenses all we could.

For this same reason, we decided not to buy a new generator, but overhaul an old one that I had got hold of in Uman. A man who proved invaluable on this job was Fyodor Cherny, who had studied before the war at an electrical engineering school in Tashkent. He was a war veteran and had joined us after his discharge from the army.

Cherny recruited some of our young fellows to help him. The only one among them who knew anything about electrical machinery was Boris Skibitsky; the rest—Konfedrat's son Anatoli, our wheelwright's son Dmitri Lisovoy and disabled war veteran Nikolai Zholomko—had been working as stablemen and teamsters. But they learnt fast on the job, and by the end of it were regular skilled electricians.

So the business of overhauling and assembling the generator got under way. Before very long, there was a row of poles with white porcelain insulators running from the Gorniy Tikich

to our main building and along the new street. From pole to pole, wires stretched.

At the same time, work was in full swing down by the river. The station building was going up on the right bank, and a little further upstream, the dam was being erected. The river bed was being lined with stone. The swishing stream might tear up stones and carry them away, but there were always more laid down—tens, hundreds, thousands of them.

No matter how the Tikich raged and foamed, man proved the stronger.

A VISIT FROM LAZAR MOISEYEVICH KAGANOVICH

In our fields, meanwhile, the battle with Nature continued. The drought of the year before had taught us many lessons, and our people were doing everything to make sure of a good crop. It would be difficult to say who worked hardest in these weeks, the builders or the field teams. People put everything they had into the work. Often you couldn't tell apart who was an electrician, fitter or bricklayer, and who a sower, weed-er, mower. If there was need, everyone turned out for field work. And when we started filling the dam, everybody went down to the river.

The early grain crops we put into the ground in 1947 in the space of six days. That was a

record even compared with prewar years. And in those years, there had been two tractors in our fields, while now there was only one; and in the matter of draught animals we were also worse off now. The amount of land, on the other hand, was larger; 150 hectares near the river had been added to it.

Even the little GAZ did its bit in the fields. It's nothing to brag of, perhaps, because we were forced to use it in order to get out of a quandary. But the truth has to be the whole truth, and so I'll tell the story.

One morning I was informed that the tractor had broken down during the night. I got into the GAZ and drove out to it right away. The tractor was an old one, and though the driver had been fussing around it all this time, he hadn't been able to get it going.

The sowing had stopped, the schedule for the day was going to the dogs. Section leaders rushed up complaining: the land would get over-dry, did I call that fighting for a big harvest?

"Yes, it's heartbreaking," I said. "I'm worried sick myself."

Rolling up my sleeves, I dived under the tractor bonnet. And here I heard chauffeur Ivan Gai-shuk saying:

"Fyodor Ivanovich, suppose we try using this old devil to pull the cultivator?"

"What old devil?"

"Why, this one," and he pointed to the GAZ.

It was worth attempting. I told him to head straight for the workshop and have a hook fixed on to the back of the car. He returned in half an hour, hooked on the cultivator and switched into first. The car moved off, trailing the cultivator as if it had never done anything else—and the field schedule for the day was duly fulfilled.

Next day we put the GAZ on harrowing the lucerne field, and when the day was up, it had a performance of 45 hectares to its credit.

As before, so that spring and summer too, the newspapermen did not forget us. They saw how our people were exerting themselves, and some enthusiastic reporters wrote, for example, that our women worked from dawn till dark without ever straightening their backs.

I don't think that's true. Our people worked as all collective farmers can work, and should. They not only straightened their backs in between, but found time to have a singsong and crack a joke. Yet the work went forward in fine style. Our section leaders—Motya Churpita, Pasha Gula, Olya Vlasenko, my wife and the rest—searched out every last bit of manure and got it carted to the fields. The cultivating of our beets, maize and other row crops was done quickly and never dragged. But here people did

not "break their backs" either, because machine cultivation was properly organized.

I have always been of the opinion that our corn, our sugar should not be the product of human sweat. We do our best to put all the arduous work onto machinery. But of that later. . . .

It was now July. This was a very busy month not only in the fields, where the harvesting and threshing was under way, but in the workshops and down by the river as well. Scheffel and his helpers were assembling the first turbine. Fyodor Cherny's Komsomol team was nearly through assembling the generator and was installing the transformer booth. Ganyuchenko and the other bricklayers were putting the facing on the station building.

Some time after three o'clock on Sunday, July 20, I came home, had my dinner and sat down to read the paper, when the telephone rang. It was Pyotr Grinchy, Second Secretary of the District Party Committee, calling from Talnoye.

"There are visitors heading your way, Fyodor Ivanovich," he informed me.

"What visitors?"

"Go out and see. . . ."

I went out and, sure enough, there were some cars coming down the road. They approached rapidly. The car in the lead was an open one, and sitting in it was Zinoviy Timofeyevich Serdyuk, Secretary of the Kiev Regional Party Com-

mittee—I recognized him a long way off. And when the car drove up, I saw Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich next to him.

He dismounted, shook hands with me and said:

“Well, Comrade Dubkovetsky, show us how you do things.”

The way I saw it, the thing that interested him first and foremost was grain, for grain was the Number One problem. An MO-900 thresher was operating nearby, and I took our visitors over to see it at work.

Running the thresher was Konon Kirilenko, and section leader Pasha Gula was doing the feeding. A real glutton for work, she did not notice for quite a time that such a very welcome visitor was there, and just kept thrusting in sheaf after sheaf.

“How much do you thresh a day?” Comrade Kaganovich enquired.

“The first couple of days the figure was 16 or 18 tons, now it’s 22 and more.”

“Good,” Lazar Moiseyevich said to that. “And when do you expect to get through with your deliveries?”

“We’ll certainly have them completed by the first of August,” I replied.

“Very good indeed!”

(Actually we completed the deliveries on the 29th of July.)

Lazar Moiseyevich looked to see if any of the grain got left among the straw or chaff; then he stood a little while and watched the corn being poured into sacks and piled into the lorry.

"I see," he said at last, "that you send your grain to the elevator straight from the thresher. Why don't other collectives do the same?"

I explained that we could do it because our thresher was a very good one. It had first-rate sieves and a reliable sorter. As I said it, I opened the panel and showed how well the sorter was doing its work.

"We turn in only top-quality grain to the state."

Lazar Moiseyevich jotted something down in his notebook, exchanged some remarks with the people on the job, then turned to me:

"Now take us to see your power project. Comrade Serdyuk here tells me you're putting up a kolkhoz hydroelectric plant."

On the way he asked how the District Party Committee and the Executive of the District Soviet were helping us, and whether they combated violations of the Rules of the Agricultural Artel; he also wanted to know how our members lived.

On seeing our turbine, which was practically complete, he asked:

"Did you really make that yourselves?"

"Yes," I said, "all on our own."

"And where did you get the material?"

I had to tell him all about it, down to the smallest detail. When I was through, he remarked with a smile:

"Why, you'll be competing with our factories next!"

After inspecting the construction site, Comrade Kaganovich said:

"And now show me where you work."

"Why, I work everywhere," I answered.

"Well, but your room, your office?"

He liked my office too. He stayed there for a while talking to me, then drove on.

As he was leaving, I asked him to have some experts sent down to make sure that we had not committed any blunders in building our power plant. He promised that he would.

A short while after, four engineers arrived. They checked up on everything and did not discover a single point to find fault with.

Everything had been done right.

WE ARE TWENTY-FIVE

Every year after the crop is in, we celebrate Harvest Home. This traditional peasant day of merrymaking is still the favourite summer festival of our members.

"We worked hard, we have a right to celebrate!"

Our regular time for the Harvest Home is

when the reaping, threshing and grain deliveries are over and it's too early yet to dig the beets and potatoes and pick the maize. That, too, is when the apples, watermelons and plums are ripe—it's the golden season, in a word.

In 1947 we departed a little from this custom and moved Harvest Home to September 24—the day fixed for the trial of the first unit of our hydroelectric station.

It was a glorious sunny day. The façade of the station building was decorated with pine boughs, flowers, little red flags, pictures of Lenin and Stalin. Across the top of it, in large letters, ran the inscription:

GAINS OF OCTOBER COLLECTIVE FARM HYDROELECTRIC STATION

1946-47

Guests had come from Talnoye and from the collective farms around. And of course our members were there one and all, dressed in their holiday best and full of happy excitement.

The river, swollen after the recent rains, muttered dully, as if resentful at finding its path blocked with stone.

Standing on the bridge across the supply canal, I felt like shouting:

"Well, old man? So you're no longer free to roam at will? Had your spell of liberty—now it's over!"

My long-cherished dream had come true. The power plant was a reality. That rushing stream had been tamed and its energy was flowing in invisible currents to our *Gains of October*.

What greater joy has man than that of victory, of achievement? That joy shone now in our members' eyes. For there wasn't a man or woman in the collective who had not done work of some kind for the power station, had not made a contribution to the building of it.

Our power plant, our joy, our little electric sun!

The veteran members of our artel—Nikita Konfedrat, my wife, her brothers Yakov and Sa-moilo—were proud indeed as they stood there among the rest.

So were Scheffel with his grey head and slight stoop, and young black-browed Fyodor Cherny, as they moved about, listening intently to the rumble of the reduction gear.

Equally proud were our young electricians—clear-eyed Anatoli Konfedrat and big, broad-shouldered Dmitri Lisovoy. They gazed delightedly at the big electric light over the façade:

"What an even light! Never flickers once!"

. Only station manager Kostya Lasman, a comparative newcomer to our kolkhoz, but an old hand at electrical engineering, was a little flustered: the power plant so lovingly built had been

given into his keeping, and it was up to him to look after it well.

Then the official ceremony on the riverbank was over, but the festivities went on for a long time after in our people's homes. The kolkhoz wine was certainly in demand that evening. Late into the night, gay songs sounded over the village.

And another six weeks brought a still greater occasion—the *Gains of October* was twenty-five years old. This birthday of ours coincided with a great nation-wide celebration—the thirtieth anniversary of the Revolution.

Twenty-five years!... I recalled the meeting at which our little group of poor peasants first decided to form an artel, recalled the deep feeling with which we sang the *Internationale*:

*We peasants, artisans and others
Enrolled among the sons of toil,
Let's claim the earth henceforth
as brothers,
Drive the indolent from the soil.*

Yes, we had driven the indolent from the soil, had claimed it and taken it for all time. We were its sole masters, and for twenty-five years we had been working it in common.

At the anniversary gathering, I traced in outline our history in these twenty-five years

and made a preliminary review of our results for 1947.

We had completed the first section of our hydroelectric plant. Had moved eight families into new homes, built a machine shop, a threshing barn and a sheepcot, bought two new binders, a sound-film installation, a piano and instruments for a brass band. Last but not least, we had all but reached the prewar grain yield figure and greatly topped our prewar yield of sugar beet.

Now I can give a fuller account of the year's results. I have before me the collective's annual report for 1947.

We had 650 hectares of land, and 122 member families; able-bodied members numbered 176, but actually (including old folk and teen-agers), 201 people had been working. The year's average labour performance per person was 420 workday units.

The grain yield averaged 16 centners per hectare planted, although all our winter wheat had perished.

Sugar beets averaged 394.5 centners per hectare.

Our average maize yield was 28 centners per hectare; and my wife, for her part, raised a crop of 51 centners on each of three hectares. She had lived up to her pledge made at that Party meeting. In addition, her section registered a

potato yield unprecedented in our district—203 centners per hectare.

The collective's total income that year was 1,229,000 rubles. Most of it came from crops—beets, grain, vegetables, fruit. We also got good returns from our livestock, and our various sidelines brought in quite a bit too.

The earnings issued per workday unit were 5 rubles in cash, 2 kilograms of grain and 600 grams of other foodstuffs (vegetables, sunflower seed, fruit). This may not seem such a great deal. But if you multiply it by 420 (the average of workday units per individual), it comes to a pretty substantial amount.

On top of this, there was the extra pay for exceeding yield standards, which was issued to 126 of the 130 people who had worked in the fields, to both the dairymaids, both the pig-tenders, the head of the livestock department, the breeding expert, the agronomist, the field-team foreman and myself.

In the old days, it was a misfortune for a poor or middle peasant to have a large family. Many mouths to feed on next to no land.

Whereas for Grigori Vlasenko, the foreman of our building crew, his big family is a blessing. Working in the collective besides himself are his wife, his daughter Olya, her husband Marko, and another daughter, Marusya. And all of them bring

earnings into the home, the way bees bring honey to their hive.

In 1947 the Vlasenkos' kolkhoz earnings came to 11,867 rubles in cash, 46 centners of grain 13 centners of maize, 4 centners of millet, 18 centners of potatoes, 75 centners of other vegetables and a centner and a quarter of sunflower seed. That's apart from the bonuses they earned on the beets.

And these bonuses were of the following order: 60 women who had worked on the beet plantation received between them 174 centners of sugar, or an average of nearly 3 centners apiece. There was also a cash bonus for each of them. Olya Vlasenko got about two thousand rubles, and another section leader, Motya Churpita, even more.

No indeed, our people were not working for a wretched 25 kopeks a day, as my mother, my sister and myself had done on that manor estate in the bad old times.

I have spoken already of the wheat crop that we lost. But for that wheat, not a single cloud would have marred our twenty-fifth anniversary.

TRIP TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA

1948 opened with a big event in my life.

On January 24, the Soviet Ukraine marked its thirtieth anniversary. A decree issued that day by the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet

awarded the Order of Lenin to seven initiators of the collective-farm movement in the Ukraine. Among the seven names was mine.

Other important happenings followed.

I was asked to the anniversary celebrations in Kiev. Then I attended a regional and an all-Ukraine conference of front-rank farmers. After that I went to Moscow for a session of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet.

At home too there was something to be happy about: Marusya presented us with a little granddaughter, whom we called Galya.

In April, when we were getting ready for our twenty-sixth spring sowing, a telegram arrived from Moscow. The U.S.S.R. Ministry of Agriculture was inviting me to be one of a delegation to Czechoslovakia, to the Slav Countries' Agricultural Exhibition opening in Prague.

I accepted with pleasure.

My wife stuffed my suitcase with food.

"Who knows how they'll feed you there?" she said. "After all, they had a crop failure last year."

I arrived in Moscow just before May Day. I hoped to see the demonstration, but was not able to: we had to hasten on our way. Leaving Moscow by air at five in the morning on May 1st, we landed in Prague at 1 p. m. Unfortunately, we missed the demonstration there too—it was already over.

A few words about our delegation. There were

sixteen of us in it: researchers, MTS directors, kolkhoz chairmen, field-team and section leaders.

I got to know all of them well during our time in Czechoslovakia, but became particularly friendly with MTS director Gvozdev from the Stalin-grad Region and with Pyotr Prozorov, chairman of the *Red October* artel in the Kirov Region.

I am determined to pay Prozorov a visit some day. His is a very interesting collective, which, like the *Gains of October*, was once a commune. Actually, it does not differ much from a commune now. The members have stopped keeping animals of their own or having their own vegetable patches. They cook at home only on high days and holidays. Ordinarily, they eat in the canteen, and their bread comes from a communal bakery.

The farm is a highly developed one, with animal produce and vegetable growing well to the fore. All processes are electrified or mechanized, and there is an electric cableway for bringing fodder to the cattle houses and for other needs.

The reception we got in Prague and in Czechoslovakia generally was a very warm, brotherly one. Mass meetings were held in our honour in every town and village we came to. We heard workers, peasants, intellectuals say, with deep emotion and gratitude:

"The Soviet Union has saved our republic twice over: from the Nazis during the war, and from famine last year."

The drought in Czechoslovakia had been very bad. We heard at the Ministry of Agriculture that even the forests had suffered: many trees had perished because of it.

The opening ceremony at the Exhibition took place on May 2. When we arrived, the Minister of Agriculture met us and conducted us to seats in front. The thousands of visitors greeted us with enthusiastic applause and shouts of welcome.

The Exhibition was opened by Comrade Gottwald, then Prime Minister.

Our Soviet pavilion, while not very large, was admirably arranged. Displayed there were the finest specimens of our agricultural machinery and kolkhoz produce. The pavilion attracted great numbers of people and was always crowded.

Comrade Gottwald visited it the very first day. After looking at the exhibits, he spent some time talking to us.

A few days later he received us in his office at the Council of Ministers building. He told us in detail about the republic's achievements, and particularly about the land reform carried out after the events of February 1948.

"This autumn it will be thirty years since our republic was founded," he said. "Bourgeois governments 'laboured' over a land reform for nearly thirty years, and in the upshot turned over to the peasants only a fifth of the area of the landed estates. And the new, democratic government in

the space of two months gave the peasants all the rest—the remaining eighty per cent of the landed properties.”

The Czechoslovak peasants have a deep love for their new, truly democratic government headed by Communists, and give it every support. We could feel that wherever we went, but particularly vivid was the manifestation of it at the Tiller's Festival on May 16. As many as 300,000 peasants from all parts of the country came to the capital for the occasion. The Tiller's Festival procession in Václavské Square was headed by 500 Czechoslovak-made tractors, gaily adorned with flowers. Tractors were the pride of Czechoslovakia's two-year plan. Before the war the republic had manufactured only 600 of them a year; the 1948 program was 9,000.

Delegations of peasants in national costumes passed singing and dancing before the platform from which Comrade Gottwald and other members of the Government greeted the marchers. The air shook with their enthusiastic cries of “Nazdar” (“Long live”).

“Nazdar Generalissimo Stalin! Nazdar Klement Gottwald!”

We stayed in Prague for several days. Besides the Exhibition, we went to see the sights of the city, notably the Hradčany (the Prague Kremlin) and the old Karlovy Bridge, and visited theatres, parks and museums.

A memorable event, which stirred us deeply, was our visit to the house in Hybernská Street in an attic room of which the Prague Conference of our Party was held in 1912. The great Lenin presided at that conference, it will be remembered, and Comrades Molotov, Kalinin and Orjonikidze took part in it. Our great Comrade Stalin, in exile at the time, was elected in his absence to the Party Central Committee.

Then we made a trip through the country. We went to several towns and saw their factories. Among the places we visited were Plzeň, and also the Czech health resorts of Mariánské Lázně and Karlovy Vary (formerly Karlsbad), which we thought very attractive.

But what I was particularly interested in was the rural areas: I looked to see what I could find there of use to ourselves. The Czechs already had machine and tractor stations, government-owned and cooperative. But that was nothing new to us. Grass-growing was well developed there, but that was not new to us either. We practised it on a still larger scale.

But they did have many things that we might find useful. For instance, I very much liked their binder, which I saw both at the Prague Exhibition and in the villages. It was horse-drawn, while the cutting and binding devices were driven by a little oil engine.

Very good, too, was their garden mattock and their special hoe for sugar-beet cultivation.

When we got back to Moscow, Comrade Benediktov, the Minister of Agriculture, promised to buy a few of each of these implements as models and have our industry produce them. In the meantime, we at the *Gains of October* decided to improve our binder ourselves on the Czech pattern.

In Prague and in the various villages we were asked to make speeches. I described the achievements of the Soviet Ukraine and the work of our own kolkhoz. The Czechs were particularly impressed by our sugar-beet yields and the bonuses that our women got for raising them.

"Three centners of sugar each!" the peasants said. "Just think of it!"

Papers and magazines in the People's Democracies give a lot of space to the achievements of our vanguard farmers. Pasha Angelina, Mark Ozyorny, Agrippina Parmuzina and other of our front-rankers are extremely popular there.

I found that people had even heard about me. At the hotel in Prague one day, a young man walked up and shook my hand, saying in Polish:

"Good day, Comrade Dubkovetsky."

I wondered how he knew me.

"I'm from Warsaw, and our papers have printed your picture," he explained. "And so I recognized you."

AN HONOURED GUEST

The Exhibition in Prague was supposed to end on May 23, but interest in it was so great that the closing date was postponed to June 1.

So we were delayed in Czechoslovakia. And during this time a very dear guest visited our kolkhoz, and I greatly regretted not having been there to receive him in person.

That guest was Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov.

I have mentioned that Comrade Khrushchov had long taken an interest in our collective. He became more interested still when we launched our power plant scheme. Seeing me at some conference early in 1947, he asked:

"Well, how is your power project getting on?"

"Everything's satisfactory, Nikita Sergeyevich," I answered. "Our only hitch is with cement. We haven't learned to make that ourselves yet."

Comrade Khrushchov said I must come and see him about it. But I really felt I couldn't... as if the Chairman of the Republic's Council of Ministers (which he was now) didn't have enough to do without being troubled about a thing like that!—and so I went instead to see Vasili Fyodorovich Starchenko, who was Vice-Chairman of the Council. As soon as he caught sight of me, Vasili Fyodorovich said:

"I'm glad you looked in. Nikita Sergeyevich was telling me you were hard up for cement. How much do you need?"

And so Comrade Khrushchov had not forgotten even a trifle like a few dozen tons of cement for some kolkhoz or other!

At the conference of the Ukraine's foremost farmers in February 1948, I was elected to the Presidium, and at one of the sessions sat next to Comrade Khrushchov and Demyan Sergeyevich Korotchenko, who is now Chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers. The question came up of grain-cleaning equipment, and, among other things, of ordinary winnowers. There weren't enough of them in the collectives at that time.

"How are you off in that respect, Comrade Dubkovetsky?" Nikita Sergeyevich enquired.

"Winnowers we have: we made them, it's not so difficult. There's another trouble, though: no sieves. You can't make those yourself, and they are not to be had."

"And other collectives haven't got them either?"

"No. Such an elementary thing, sieves, and yet for some reason our industry doesn't produce them."

Nikita Sergeyevich made a note and then proceeded to question me about other things: how we did our maize planting, what machinery we had for sugar-beet cultivation.

In the course of the same conversation he said:

"I've been meaning to visit you for a long time, but haven't been able to squeeze it in. This year, though, I'll come without fail."

And that May Nikita Sergeyevich kept his word and came to our *Gains of October*. Here is the account my wife gave me of his visit:

"Some time before dinner, around noon or maybe a little after, I was out with the girls on the beet plantation, weeding. We'd got a long way from the road when Marusya Vlasenko calls out suddenly:

"'Look, there's a string of cars heading our way!'

"When they got to our plantation, the cars pulled up.

"I dropped my hoe and made towards them. And when I came close, I recognized Nikita Sergeyevich. It certainly was a surprise....

"Comrade Khrushchov took a look at our beets, asked what other crops my section was growing, then he wanted to know:

"'What about lucerne, have you got any of that?'

"He put questions about other grasses too—he seemed particularly interested in those. Then he drove along to the power plant, looked everything over, asked in detail about it all.

"On the way back, he turned in at our home-

stead, looked over the buildings, the orchard, the beehives, the cattle houses."

I enquired whether she had asked him to stay for dinner.

"Why, of course. But he only thanked me and said he'd just had a meal. All we could persuade him was to try some of our wine."

Nikita Sergeyevich became interested in the wine we make out of rhubarb. Rhubarb grows just like a weed in our parts, it yields immensely.

"Everything's fine, I'm only sorry your husband isn't home. But I'll come again some time," Nikita Sergeyevich said as he was leaving.

Shortly afterwards, we received a letter from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Ukraine, asking us to supply them with all the rhubarb seed we could. Nikita Sergeyevich must have suggested it.

VASIL GALYUK "NEVER SAW THE LIKE"

In June, the *Gains of October* had a visitor from across the Dniester—Vasil Galyuk from my native Zarozhany. Galyuk is an in-law of mine, being married to my cousin.

He brought no end of messages from my relations and told me a piece of good news: a kol-khoz—the first one—had been formed in Zarozhany. And so he had come to take a look at how

collective farmers of long standing lived and worked.

Though close on sixty, Galyuk behaved like a child in some ways, marvelling at everything and exclaiming every other minute:

"My word, the things you here have managed to do!"

At breakfast he marvelled at the fresh cucumbers that we raised under glass. Eating the sausage, he asked:

"You buy that in the shop, I suppose?"

"No, we make it right here in the kolkhoz."

"Why, it's just like the real factory kind!"

He drank our wine and smacked his lips:

"My word, isn't it tasty!"

After breakfast I took him around the farm, out to the fields and down to the river. My Moskvich midget car positively flabbergasted him: he simply couldn't believe it was my own.

"Do you really mean it's yours?..."

"It's mine all right. Bought it with my own money."

He shook his head in astonishment and said:

"Well, I've lived in the world for well-nigh sixty years and never saw the like. Strike me dead, I never saw the like. Why, who ever heard of a peasant having a car?"

We turned in at the cattle houses. In the cowshed they were getting ready to milk. The dairymaids put on clean smocks, washed their

hands and walked about the shed looking like hospital nurses. The cows were drinking at the moment, with their noses to the automatic taps.

"What's that they're doing?" my visitor wanted to know.

"Drinking water."

I took him up close and showed how the taps worked.

"So you don't have to drive them down to the water?"

"As you see. We have electricity pumping water to the stable and pigpen too, and into the kitchens for the women."

The next surprise he got was our electric motors. We already had 22 of them, with a total capacity of 500 h. p.; they cut the straw and beets for animal-feed, drove the flour mill, the machinery in our workshops, the ventilators in the smithy, the circular saw, the oil press and other things.

"At threshing time, electricity will operate both our threshers, and also the winnowers and sorters," I told him. "And in time we'll use it for baking too."

This had my guest completely amazed. He could only raise his hands in wonder and repeat:

"My word, what marvels there are in the world! And where do you get it from, this electricity?"

"I'll take you to see in a moment."

In the fields, the rye was coming on nicely, and the wheat was a sight for sore eyes. I was proud to show them to my visitor from across the Dniester. The beets were doing well too. Seeing my wife on the plantation, busy hoeing with the rest of her section, Galyuk asked after visible hesitation:

"Why does your wife work in the fields? Here you ride about in a car, and she..."

"Well, what about her?" I asked, barely able to keep from laughing.

"Why, with you so well off, she could stay home and take life easy."

I explained that our people hold it shameful to "take life easy."

"And it would be particularly shameful in my wife, because she is a Party member and should be an example to the other women."

I don't know whether Galyuk understood. He mumbled something under his breath and changed the subject:

"Why do you plant your maize so far apart?"

And he pointed to our intertilled fallow. Again I had to explain. He listened carefully, then said:

"My word, how far ahead you've got! Doing everything in such learned ways! We'll have a hard time catching up with you."

"It won't be as hard as all that."

"No, old man, we're terribly far behind—a

score of years and more," he returned with a sigh; but after a moment's pause he added: "We'll do our level best, though, we certainly will!"

We drove down to the power plant. The Tikhich leapt noisily over the stones, but the even rumbling of the reductor drowned it out. Operator Nikolai Zholomko was on duty at the station, with Marusya Basok at the control panel.

Zholomko was disabled in the war. Coming back after his discharge from the army, he worked in the stables for a time; then, when we started building the power station, he learnt the trade of electrician, and station manager Lasman trained him for his present job.

Marusya Basok, one of our young girls, used to work in the fields before, but she too learnt her new job quickly and likes it well. The other two operators and two control-panel girls are also our own villagers.

Galyuk looked at the practised way Marusya handled the switches, which to him were a complete mystery, and said:

"A girl, and managing a thing like that! It's the truth I tell you, I never saw the like...."

In the evening, our young people gave an entertainment in the clubhouse in our visitor's honour. Then there was a film.

We have our own film projector, one of our own people operates it, and we show all the latest pictures.

As he got ready to go home, Galyuk confessed:

"If I hadn't seen all this with my own eyes, I would never believe it. Here I'm going home, and I'm afraid the folks there won't believe me either. You're wonderfully well off, good people. I pray I may be as well off, at least in my old age."

MEDITATIONS OF A KOLKHOZ CHAIRMAN

There are many different kinds of work in the world, and each is good in its own way. I'd like to say something here about the work of the farmer, and in particular of the collective-farm chairman.

The chairman of the kolkhoz might be likened to the father of a big family or to the queen bee in a hive. He is the organizer and educator of the membership. He plays an important part in implementing Soviet policy in the countryside.

Many kolkhoz chairmen apply to me for advice and assistance, as a Deputy and a member of the Government Collective-Farm Council. Most of them do it by letter, but those from nearer parts come in person.

Many of them I know as real master hands at their job. One such, in my opinion, is Ivan Artyomovich Remenets, chairman of the *Voroshilov*

kolkhoz, with which we have an emulation agreement.

The *Voroshilov* farm was for a long time a backward one. It was all at sixes and sevens when Remenets first took charge.

Today, thanks to the new chairman's competent leadership and the emulation contest, the farm ranks among the best. In overall yield figures, they have caught up with us, and the yields secured by some of the teams and sections are truly outstanding.

As regards livestock, too, they have made good headway, and the same holds true in many other things. For example, taking a leaf out of our book, they have laid out a 15-hectare orchard, have sown 140 hectares to lucerne, have made two ponds.

Remenets is a frequent visitor at the *Gains of October*. I recall particularly well one visit he paid me.

"You know why I looked in, Fyodor?" he asked with a rather portentous air.

"You tell me, then I'll know."

"Want to have a heart-to-heart talk with you. As our representative on the Collective-Farm Council and as a fellow chairman."

My wife fetched a pickled watermelon from the cellar and brought out a decanter of currant wine. Remenets clinked glasses with me, threw a kiss at little Galya, who was sitting on my lap,

drained his glass and proceeded to unburden himself:

"Here I am planning the working for the autumn, the winter and next spring. Eager to get ahead, in a word. There are all sorts of things I've planned, and we've got the money for them. A tremendous deal could be done, but it isn't getting done very fast."

"Now you're telling me things," I grinned. "Why is that?"

"Not enough skilled forces. Take bricks or tiles. Simple enough to make them, you'd think, and yet there's no one to do it. Or take bricklaying. . . ."

I thought for a moment, I must confess, that he'd come to ask for a loan of our bricklayers. But I was wrong. Remenets was not looking at the thing just from his own angle, he was taking a broad, statesmanlike view.

"I'm not talking now about my own kolkhoz, but about all of them. Take even yours: you've got more craftsmen than we have, but still you haven't enough. There's a shortage of them everywhere. Now why shouldn't a kolkhoz trade school, or whatever you like to call it, be set up to meet the need? Why shouldn't there be classes or short-term schools where young people from the collectives would be trained to be bricklayers, plasterers, fitters, electricians, brick and tile makers? You're our representative, Fyodor. Bring

up the point in Kiev, or even in Moscow. We've had enough of bulrush huts. We want proper houses now."

My wife refilled the glasses and pressed him to drink, but Remenets, deep in his subject, went on:

"Or take a thing like this. The household plots. Our members should, of course, have vegetable plots of their own. But what do we see now? The approved size of household plots in our district is from three to seven tenths of a hectare per family. Now we have some families of six and eight people with plots of three tenths, but there are other households, of just one or two people, which have seven tenths. I ask you, if a woman's got an outsize plot like that, which is she going to care more about in the busy season—the kolkhoz vegetables or her own?"

"Well, but not all kolkhozes are the same," I answered. "Here in the *Gains of October* the household plots are small. Our members don't care over much about them."

"Well, that's in your collective. While in mine there are still some whose heads are taken up all summer with their own seven tenths of a hectare."

There were many such important questions that Remenets brought up. He asked me to note them down and raise them with the central authorities.

“And here’s one last point you should make a note of and take up in Moscow or Kiev,” he continued. “Say it’s the wish of the collective farmers at large.”

“Yes, what is it?”

“It’s this. Before the war we used to have a Harvest Festival. Not everywhere, but it did exist. The kolkhoz day of celebration. You don’t hear about it nowadays. We just have the old-time Harvest Home. But Harvest Home isn’t a real festival. It’s a primitive, local sort of thing. Whereas what we should have is a real, big festival of all the collective farmers in the country. The same as the miners have and the railwaymen, the tankmen, the gunners, the airmen. It should be instituted, absolutely. For it isn’t as if we were only a great industrial power—we’re a great kolkhoz power as well!”

Raising his glass, he proclaimed:

“Here’s to our future festival of the farmer!”

And there was a pride and solemnity in the way he spoke the last four words.

Those were not the words of the old-time peasant, a poor unhappy creature struggling desperately for a crust of bread. They were the words of a farmer of the new, socialist type, who thinks in terms of the future of his great country.

And for a long time after, we sat talking. We spoke of our life of today and peered into our life of tomorrow.

We saw our collectives highly developed and organized agricultural factories with scores of complex implements and machines—factories yielding an abundance of products for the nation.

WE RECEIVE POLISH PEASANTS

And now 1949 arrived.

As they saw it in, our Soviet men and women offered toasts both to the undertakings in hand and to further achievements.

"Here's to health and happiness!" we said, and each knew for sure that the new year would indeed be a happy one.

For our collective the year held out rich promise. We had topped the prewar level in both crops and stock raising. We had machines and electricity now and were all set for another impressive advance.

For me personally the new year started with big events. The Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Ukraine met at the end of January, and in his report at that congress Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov commended our kolkhoz. He said that the collectives led by Posmitny, Litovchenko, Dubkovetsky and others were raising big harvests regularly, year after year, because they worked the land on scientific lines. He praised us—but at the same time warned us not to get swelled heads: "Even these

vanguard collectives," he said, "have not yet introduced the travopolye system in full."

And that was true enough. We do not yet do everything properly, in the way the Party teaches us, in accordance with the precepts of Soviet agricultural science.

At this congress I was elected alternate member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine.

Soon after the congress, an all-Ukraine conference of front-rank farmers was held in Kiev. Present at this conference were some visitors from Poland—our brother peasants who had come to the Land of Socialism to learn the new way of living and working.

By agreement with other kolkhoz chairmen, I invited the Polish peasants to visit our collectives.

"We'll welcome you like brothers and sisters," I said. "We'll show you everything we have and tell you all about the way we do things."

One party of Polish peasants came to our *Gains of October*, and were very pleased with the visit. They said so at a reception arranged for them by the government of the Ukraine, and also afterwards in their newspapers.

The two I remembered best were Maria Walas of the Łódź Province and Jan Kulaga from Lower Silesia.

"I was always as poor as a church mouse,"

Jan told us. "I left Poland when I was 15, for under the gentry it was nothing but a stepmother to me, and went to seek my fortune in foreign parts. But wherever the gentry rule, the poor man's lot is the same."

He was tremendously impressed with the things he saw on our farm—the mechanization, the modern scientific methods, the members' prosperous homes—and said:

"A peasant who doesn't have to worry about whether he'll have a roof over his head tomorrow and where he'll get food to eat and clothes to wear, and who thinks instead about having water laid on in his house and about what make of motorcycle or radio to buy—a peasant like that can truly be called happy."

The Ukrainian people have long been noted for their hospitality. But this time they surpassed themselves. Our members welcomed the Polish peasants like long-lost brothers.

A thing that especially pleased me was the way an elderly couple by the name of Belenky acted on this occasion. I could remember how hesitant they had been about joining the collective, how they had hung back to see what would come of it. Now they were enthusiastic advocates of the collective way, ardent campaigners for socialism.

"Sign up with the kolkhoz as soon as you get home," they told our guests earnestly. "Don't

hiver-hover—you see yourselves how well off we are. We've got electricity and radio, wheaten bread and bacon and wine. . . .”

And so that the visitors could convince themselves of the prosperity that collective farming brings, the old folk insisted on showing them the supplies in their pantry and storeroom and loft.

PEASANT CONGRESS IN WARSAW

The Polish peasants invited Soviet collective farmers to visit their country, to see how they were building the new life and to help them with experience and advice.

Before very long the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Agriculture did arrange such a trip. A delegation of 17 went, and I had the honour of heading it.

There were some splendid people among the delegates: tractor driver Ivan Bortakovsky, now director of an MTS in the Ryazan Region and winner of a Stalin Prize; Pyotr Azhirkov, chairman of a vanguard collective in the Moscow Region; Praskovya Malinina, manager of a pedigree stock farm in the Kostroma Region, and Fyodor Goncharov and Fyodor Trushkevich, kol-khoz chairmen from the Kuban and Byelorussia.

From the Ukraine there were 4 people besides myself, all of them Heroes of Socialist Labour: section leader Elena Hobta of the Kiev Region,

dairymaid Maria Savchenko of the Sumy Region, and kolkhoz chairmen David Boiko of Podolyá and Alexei Shcherbina of the Dniepropetrovsk Region.

April 2 saw us in Moscow. The day was fine and clear, and a plane was waiting for us at the aerodrome. At 1 p.m. it took off and, after describing a circle over the capital, set its nose for the West.

All our delegates were thrilled by the trip. Here we were going abroad, and by air too. Time was when only "the quality" went on foreign tours, while the peasant only knew by hearsay that there were other countries in the world. The farthest we ever went was to the next market town. And my mother never saw a railway engine in her life.

In those days it was only in fairy tales that old peasant women could travel "over hill, over dale and over the wide blue seas." And now 67-year-old peasant delegate Elena Semyonovna Hobta was taking a plane trip abroad.

The plane soared over the expanses of our Homeland, over fields and copses where spring was already coming into its own. There might still be some snow in the gulleys, but in the fields work was already in full swing. People were out early, anxious to keep the moisture in, and then, too, they were giving the winter corn dressings of fertilizer.

Towards nightfall the Western Bug came in sight—that was the border—and soon after, our plane landed on the Warsaw aerodrome. Here we were given a hearty welcome by representatives of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and the various political parties, and our Ambassador was also there to greet us.

From the aerodrome we drove in to the city and were put up at the Sejmowy Hotel, where the members of the Polish parliament stay.

At the time of our visit, the third National Congress of the Peasant Mutual Assistance League was meeting in Warsaw, and before I proceed with my account, let me say a few words about this League. It was formed back in the days of the heroic fight against the fascist occupiers, at the end of 1944. In the years since, it has grown in numbers and strength, has rid itself of nationalist and kulak riffraff, and has become a powerful factor in the reconstruction of Poland's farming on socialist lines. At the time I am speaking of, the membership had grown to over 1,200,000.

We were received at the congress with open arms. When the chairman announced that a delegation of Soviet collective farmers had arrived, the three and a half thousand Polish peasants in the hall responded with thunderous applause, cheers and enthusiastic cries of:

“Long Live Polish-Soviet Friendship!”

“Long Live Stalin!”

Our delegates received many marks of attention. They were asked to occupy one of the boxes, while Elena Semyonovna and myself were elected to the presidium.

The delegation from the Cracow Province presented us with a huge bouquet. Handing it to Elena Semyonovna, who was well known there, a peasant woman from that province exclaimed:

"Long live Hero of Labour Elena Hobta!"

Our hearts glowed with joy for our fellow delegate. A starving pauper in the past, who had known nothing but drudgery, she was now a person of such consequence and renown. Elena Semyonovna replied briefly, but with great feeling:

"Thank you, dear friends. May you be as prosperous and happy as we Soviet farmers are."

The congress was addressed by the President of the Polish Republic, Bolesław Bierut. He spoke of the tremendous tasks facing Poland's peasantry and of the part the Mutual Assistance League had to play in remaking their life.

A good part of the President's speech was devoted to friendship between the Soviet and Polish peoples, and he thanked the Ukrainian government warmly for the wonderful hospitality the Polish peasant delegation had been accorded in the Ukraine.

After the President, I was called on to speak. It is hard to describe what I felt as I mounted the rostrum. As spokesman of the millions of collec-

tive farmers of the Land of Socialism, I was about to address the peasants of Poland, just setting foot on the socialist path. Would they understand me? Would they understand the great ideas that inspire our Soviet peasants? Would I be able to convey these ideas to them, particularly in a language that, though similar to theirs, was not their own?

My apprehensions proved unwarranted. Our Polish brothers understood me perfectly. Applause flamed up whenever I spoke of the Soviet Union's magnificent achievements. Twice my speech was interrupted by enthusiastic singing of the *Internationale*—a demonstration of the Polish peasants' faith in the ideas of socialism. And each time the name of Stalin was uttered, they rose to their feet in a mighty ovation to our leader.

Yes, they understood me. We were speaking a common tongue. And some of their own number who had been to the Ukraine rounded out my speech.

One of these, delegate Pawlus of Lembergski County, had visited our own *Gains of October*. He said:

"I was the guest of the Ukrainian collective farmers, and, among others, of the members of the *Gains of October*, whose chairman we see in the presidium here. We saw with our own eyes all Comrade Dubkovetsky has just spoken of. And we too shall set up collectives as our Soviet

friends have done. That way lies happiness for us."

Collective forms of farming were one of the principal topics of discussion at the congress, which drew up Model Rules for the three main types of agricultural cooperatives in Poland. In many ways they are like our own kolkhoz rules of early days, and it was very gratifying to see the Polish farmers drawing so eagerly on our experience.

Our Polish brothers are fortunate. They are following a trail that we have blazed, and will not have to wrestle with many of the difficulties that we came up against in our day.

A TRIP TO SOME POLISH VILLAGES

The congress lasted three days. When it was over, we were invited to visit some Polish villages.

"Come and see how we've been rebuilding our land since the Soviet Army freed it from the fascists' clutches," people told us. "Come and see how we are laying the foundations of socialism."

On April 6 we set out. This was the fifth spring of freedom in Poland's fields and woods. All the land now belonged to the people. The former manor houses were the only reminder that not so long ago the gentry had reigned here.

The ravages that the five years of fascist oc-

cupation wrought in Poland are well known. If the capitalists and landlords had been in the saddle, who can say how long it would have taken to repair the damage to her farming? It would have required at least ten years, and maybe more, to restore the prewar level.

The new, people's Poland topped the prewar grain and sugar output all the way back in 1948. While rationing still exists in the West-European countries that accepted the "benefits" of the Marshall plan, in Poland people have already forgotten about it.

But as regards livestock, the Poles had great difficulties. The Nazi invaders had laid the country waste, and by the time they were driven out, there were few animals left. Much had been done to remedy the situation. In the matter of pigs, an increase of nearly 250 per cent had been achieved in the three years preceding our visit. The number of cows had also grown a good deal, but still there were not enough. Dr. Stefan Ignar, President of the Peasant Mutual Assistance League, said about this at the congress:

"Are we going to accept a situation where seven Polish citizens cling to the four teats of every cow?"

Now Poland has a plan for the development of livestock farming, and good progress is being made with it.

As our bus rolled along, our eyes were glued

to the windows. In the fields people were ploughing, harrowing, sowing. It was queer to see fields crisscrossed with balks and sowing being done by hand. These were things we had forgotten long ago.

But then someone called out:

"Look, there's a tractor!"

"And another, and a third one over there!"

Every tractor we saw on Polish soil delighted us. They already had them, though not many as yet, and they belonged to machine and tractor stations and machine hiring depots.

With Soviet help, the new Poland has already built a tractor plant of her own. It is called "Ursus."

The machine and tractor stations we saw in 1949 were still small ones. The one in the village of Lentowo, Płock County, had only two tractors, for instance. There was no farming collective there at the time, and the tractors worked the fields of the individual farmers. They couldn't get going properly on the narrow strips, and the peasants said:

"The machine's a wonder, but it has to have space."

And that in itself showed them that they must join forces.

Where we did see a farming collective was in the village of Wilkowice, Łódź County.

Everywhere we came we were made very wel-

come and greeted with flowers and bread and salt, the old-time token of hospitality. But the reception we got in Wilkowice was beyond anything yet.

It started before we ever got to the village: a party of horsemen on very nice mounts festively decked with flowers met our bus on the road and escorted us to our destination. There we found the whole community assembled to greet us. When we got out of the bus, a middle-aged woman came forward with bread and salt. I looked and could hardly believe my eyes: it was Maria Walas, the very same that had sat next to me in the presidium of the front-rank farmers' conference in Kiev and had afterwards been our guest at the *Gains of October*.

Alongside her walked Antoni Sujko, the chairman of the collective. He too had been in the Ukraine, and he hailed us like an old friend.

After the meeting they showed us over the village. It was not a very large one, some seventy households in all. Of these, ten were well-to-do and four were regular kulak farms. But the great majority of the villagers were poor and middle peasants. They had been given land from the former estate, but hadn't been able to work it: some had no horses, others no tools. And so in 1948 they had set up a producers' cooperative and done their autumn planting in common. And after Antoni Sujko and Maria Walas came back

from the Ukraine, they had decided to switch to artel status.

After seeing the village, we were asked to have dinner. There were close to a hundred people at that dinner, and nearly as many toasts. We drank to the thriving of the Wilkowice artel, to eternal friendship between the Soviet and Polish peoples, to the President of the republic, Bolesław Bierut.

And no words can describe the enthusiasm with which toasts were offered to the new Poland's best friend, Comrade Stalin.

ON THE ODER

We went to the ancient Polish territories along the Oder.

On arriving in Wrocław, the capital of the region, we first of all visited the burial ground of the Soviet soldiers who laid down their lives in the fighting for the city. One of these was my elder son, Lieutenant Vladimir Dubkovetsky.

As we placed wreaths on the heroes' graves, each of us was thinking:

"Rest in peace, dear lads. The cause you fought for has triumphed, both at home on the Dnieper and here on the Oder. We are building a glorious future. And our Polish brothers are following confidently in our footsteps."

We were interested to see what our friends

had accomplished in rehabilitating this region. In the autumn of 1945, only 10 per cent of the land here had been planted. Now all of it was being tilled. The land-hungry peasants from further east who had moved here were working with a will to make Lower Silesia a thriving land of plenty. Many state farms (patterned on ours) had already been set up, and quite a few agricultural collectives.

We visited one of these, in the village of Pszenno, Swidnica District.

This collective had been in existence for several years. It had been organized by Poles returned from France. When they were given land here, they saw no sense in splitting it up into little individual plots, and proceeded to work it in common. And early in the spring of 1949 they went over to regular artel status, adopting rules that hardly differed at all from ours.

Showing us over the farm, the chairman of this young artel, Jan Dończak, said:

"We're not as rich as you are, of course. But we do have some results to show already."

It was gratifying to learn that they had taken over many of our ways. They already had performance quotas for all types of work, and the proceeds were distributed on the workday-unit system.

We were presented with a beautiful vase with the inscription: "To our brother collective

farmers of the Ukraine from the members of the Pszenno collective, Poland." To the *Gatns of October* members they made a gift of a fine clock.

Beyond Swidnica lie the Sudeten Mountains and the Czechoslovak border. We drove along it. On our right the purple mountains rose, to the left stretched broad fields, planted mostly to rye and wheat. The winter corn showed green already.

The last place we went to in Poland was a village called Sliwice. I'm not going to describe the music, flowers and warm speeches of greeting with which we were met. The reception we got was wonderful.

Former poor peasants from the Cracow Province had migrated to Sliwice, and in the collective way of farming they had found the happiness they sought. Their artel was a small one—16 households in all. But it was already firm on its feet and had splendid prospects before it. It owned a tractor, 11 horses, 50 pigs and 60 head of cattle. All the corn planting was done by drills, and binders were used in the harvesting.

Elena Semyonovna Hobta met someone she knew here—Zofia Rusek, whose acquaintance she had made in Kiev, was from the Sliwice collective. The two women embraced like sisters, and Zofia insisted on having Elena Semyonovna visit her home.

The Sliwice people pay reverent tribute to the memory of Soviet fighting men killed in the war. A Soviet soldier has been buried in the middle of the village, in front of the clubhouse, and by decision of a general meeting of the collective, a monument is to be erected on his grave.

And as we placed wreaths on the grave, artel chairman Władysław Rusek said with feeling:

"May our friendship, sealed with blood, endure as long as the sun shines in the sky."

WE VISIT POLAND'S PRESIDENT

Our stay in Poland was drawing to a close. However much you may enjoy a visit, there's no place like home—and we were also anxious to get back because the busiest part of the spring was at hand.

Elena Semyonovna kept fretting:

"How will those girls of mine get the kok-saghyz planted by themselves?"

"They'll get it planted, Elena Semyonovna," we would reassure her. "Don't you worry."

"It's all very well to talk. Suppose something goes wrong...."

On April 12 we returned to Warsaw. We spent the day sightseeing, and in the evening we went to the theatre.

One ought by rights to say much more about the Polish capital, but I'll have to leave that to

others. I'll only mention our visit to a school that trains chairmen and bookkeepers for farming cooperatives.

From the way the students there treated us, we might have been professors of collective farming. They questioned us about every detail of kolkhoz organization and took notes of everything we said.

A Polish translation of the first edition of this booklet of mine, incidentally, is very nearly a textbook to them.

The following day all of us were invited to the Belvedere Palace, where President Bierut received us. He shook hands all round, asked us to be seated, and himself sat down next to me.

And so here was I, a plain peasant, nothing but a pauper in former days, sitting next to the president of a neighbouring state. Where was such a thing ever seen before?

I thought of the way the gentry used to stir up trouble between Pole and Ukrainian. How good it was to know that those times were gone, never to return!

The president of the new Poland is a man of the people, he comes of peasant folk like ourselves. There was nothing official about him as he sat there in our midst, and he treated us like friends and comrades.

Talking to me, he said with a little smile, as if apologizing for the question:

"Do you mind my asking how old you are?"

"Fifty-five," I told him.

"You certainly don't look it!"

Then he asked about our impressions of Poland, and we recounted them briefly.

As we spoke about Poland's socialist reconstruction prospects, President Bierut told us about the republic's six-year plan of economic development. Six hundred big new factories and mills are to be built under this plan, and industrial output is to reach more than four times the prewar volume.

Agriculture too is to be developed greatly. About 2,000,000 hectares are to be drained and turned into farmland in the next few years, and it is proposed to secure a 35-40 per cent increase in yields.

At the close of the conversation, President Bierut voiced his thanks to the Soviet Government for sending us to Poland and specially asked me to give his regards to Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov.

On the 14th we left for Moscow. Flying over Polish soil, I found myself thinking:

"How good it is to know that Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Poles, Czechoslovaks and the other peoples of Eastern Europe have found a common tongue at last!

"How splendid that the same bright sun, lit by Lenin and Stalin, lights the way for all of us!"

DRY SPRING AND GOLDEN AUTUMN

Elena Semyonovna was not the only one in a hurry to get home. All of us were impatient to be back. The Soviet farmer's made that way: he thinks not even the grass will grow if he isn't there to see to it.

The spring proved a dry one. There had been no rain since planting time. Dry weather held all through April and May. The ground cracked and the wind drove clouds of dust along the roads.

Making my daily round of the fields, I inspected the crops anxiously. But I would return home reassured: the spring corn was pushing up finely, the winter crops were bright and green, and the beets too were doing well.

That spring of 1949 showed once again what marvels our advanced Soviet farming methods can perform. What would have happened if we hadn't ploughed the summer and winter fallow well and early, had not practised snow detention, had not seen to keeping the moisture in and given the winter crops supplementary fertilizer in the spring? Our corn would have been left without moisture and would have fallen a prey to the scorching sun and hot winds.

As it was, that did not happen. When some more guests from abroad—a party of Rumanian peasants—came to our kolkhoz early in June, we had crops that we did not need to be ashamed of.

The spring plantings were growing particularly fast, and fastest of all the barley: it came splendidly through the drought. But the rains got the better of it, I'm sorry to say. They set in at the end of June, just when it was flowering, and laid it flat on the ground. Nature is still a fickle customer to deal with.

At harvest time, too, rain caused us plenty of trouble. The barley had to be cut with scythes, not by combine as planned. We had to bring in the building team to do it, and that told on the building work.

The rains also affected the rate of grain delivery. True, electricity helped us out: we got an electric drier and dried the grain that way. But even so the deliveries dragged. While in previous years we had completed them at the very beginning of August, now it was August 13 before we got our last receipt for grain turned in to the state.

We are having to fight on two fronts: against drought and against rain. Drought we have learnt to combat by now, and it no longer holds any terrors for us. But the rains are still a menace. It still happens that they ruin our rich hay crops. Our scientist comrades must help us here.

It was a fine harvest and no mistake, in field, truck garden and orchard. Work hard to bring it home, farmer!—the whole nation will thank you for your exertions now.

Especially plentiful was the crop in our orchard. We shipped several carloads of apples to Leningrad and Sverdlovsk, and a large supply we dried or used to make wine. A lot of fruit was also issued to the membership.

In spite of the dry spring and rainy summer, the autumn was a golden one for us, in most crops if not all.

Here are our yield figures for the year. By way of comparison I shall also give those of our neighbours, the *Broad Fields* collective. Our winter wheat yielded 19.6 centners per hectare, theirs, 9.3. Of spring wheat they got no crop at all, we averaged 21 centners per hectare. As regards barley, our yield was 20 centners, theirs, 10.5, and for maize the figures were respectively 32.7 centners and 17. Taking the overall average for grains and legumes, our figure was 20.4 centners per hectare and theirs was 12.

Where we didn't do so well was with the beets. I've got to say here, by way of self-criticism, that we didn't live up to our pledge. My wife's section, it is true, brought in 515 centners from each of its 3 hectares, but the average for the plantation as a whole was only 288.7. Over at the *Broad Fields* it was still less—174—but that was no consolation.

The issues per workday unit came to 5 rubles 50 in cash and 2.4 kilograms of grain. That's

without the extras for exceeding yield standards, and nearly all our members received those.

The issues of sugar were, of course, less than in 1947. But those who worked well got plenty. Each of the women in my wife's section, for example, received 2 centners of sugar and 1,350 rubles in cash as extra pay.

I haven't said very much up to now about the people who look after our animals, and in particular about those with specialized training. In charge of all this side of our work is Leonid Boiko, who, as I mentioned, is a college-trained breeding expert. Let me give you the figures of his earnings and leave you to judge for yourselves whether it pays skilled people like him to work right on the farm. In 1949 Boiko received 57 centners of grain, 6 centners of apples, 602 litres of milk, 4 piglets and 13,292 rubles in cash, besides meat, wool and wine.

Now let's see how our issues compared with those at the *Broad Fields*. There the workday unit brought in 1 ruble 60 in cash and 1.7 kilograms of grain. That is not counting the extras, but then, only five of their people earned any: four fieldworkers and one of the pig tenders.

Such was the picture, in general outline. All in all, the *Broad Fields* people came off worse than we did. They put in much fewer workday units than our members. At the *Gains of October*, the year's individual performance averaged 368

units, at the *Broad Fields*, only 242. So even if the issues per unit had been the same, the people at our farm would have received half as much again as at the *Broad Fields*.

And two more figures. I must ask the reader's pardon for quoting so many of them, but figures give you the clearest idea of the stubborn things called facts.

Those figures are: 1,073,396 and 164,117 rubles. The first is the 1949 income of our collective, the second, that of the *Broad Fields*. And mind you, the land area was practically the same in both cases, ours being only 83 hectares more.

If these figures are divided by the land area, what it comes to is that we had a return of 1,742 rubles 50 kopeks per hectare, and the *Broad Fields*, 308 rubles 80 kopeks—little more than a sixth of ours.

And this item—income per land unit—is, I think, the surest index of the prosperity of a collective and its membership.

FOLLOWING KHRUSHCHOV'S ADVICE

The reader already knows that Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov took an interest in the *Gains of October* all along and entered into every detail of our life. Like a wise father, he would commend us if we deserved it, and scold us if we deserved that.

That was what happened in the spring of 1949, for example. He came over, took a drive around the fields, inspected everything closely and then asked me to get the management board and the Party members together.

I felt in my bones that we were in for a wigging. And so it proved. Nikita Sergeyevich praised the state of our beet plantings and tilled fallow, and also our "green conveyor" (of which I shall speak later), but our maize crop came in for no uncertain criticism.

And sitting there, I knew that he was right. There was no getting away from it—we were at fault.

A plenary session of the Kiev Regional Committee of the Party met a few days after, and in his speech there, Nikita Sergeyevich again took us to task for our maize. Well, I thought, now I'm in his black books for good.

But I was mistaken. About a month later I was in Kiev again, attending a conference of agricultural experts. When the morning session ended, Nikita Sergeyevich called me over and asked:

"Where are you dining? Maybe you'll have dinner with me?"

"I'd like to," I said, "but ..."

"No 'buts,'" he declared. "I had dinner once at your place, didn't I?"

"I'm not alone, you see," I told him. "My wife is here with me."

"Better still," Nikita Sergeyevich replied. "The more, the merrier."

And so we went. All through dinner I expected him to revert to the maize again. But he did not bring it up any more. He asked me about our harvest prospects, about the collective's plan, and then inquired:

"Don't you feel rather cramped in your kolkhoz?"

"What do you mean?" I queried, puzzled by the question.

"Just what I say. It's none too large, is it, your collective. No room to get going properly...."

And it was true that, compared with many of the collectives in the Ukraine, the *Gains of October* was rather on the small side. And naturally, the larger a kolkhoz is, the more efficiently you can run it and the better it will pay.

But where was more land to come from? Long before this, in the prewar days, I had suggested to the *Broad Fields* that we should merge our two farms. Their leaders had favoured the idea, but among the membership many had opposed it.

After the war nothing had come of it either. More of the *Broad Fields* people were in favour of merging now, but among our own members the scheme had fewer supporters.

"Why should we team up with those dawdlers?" said some.

"Here we've got a power plant and all kinds of machines, and what have they got? Half a dozen carts and a broken-down seeder," said others—they were exaggerating, of course.

Nikita Sergeyevich laughed when I told him the story, then he said:

"You have another try. It would be a good thing if you two did merge. . . ."

Three months passed. I talked the thing over with our membership and with our neighbours too. This time the merger scheme encountered no opposition to speak of. It only remained to decide what would be the best time to carry it out.

And here too Nikita Sergeyevich helped us.

It was October by now. We had finished the field jobs and were fixing up the cattle houses to bring in the animals from their summer pasture.

I was out in the yard one day, standing by the mechanical saw and watching its work for the sheer pleasure of the thing. I remember when it used to take sawyers a whole day to deal with one log; with the mechanical saw it gets done in a few minutes, quickly and deftly.

Suddenly I felt someone plucking at my sleeve:

"Comrade Khrushchov is here!"

I'm not an excitable fellow, but still, my heart stirred uneasily: suppose he found some-

thing amiss again? Everything seemed enough order, but then, as the saying goes, others see us better than we see ourselves.

And there was something else too. The fact of the matter is, I always feel a little awkward meeting Nikita Sergeyevich. You see, he once told me that he didn't come to the *Gains of October* just to visit us, but to—learn from us. Now when you have a "pupil" like Nikita Sergeyevich, you want to show him something out of the ordinary—and achievements out of the ordinary don't come just for the asking. How many times could I show the same old power plant? And what else was there? It was time we did something new.

What Nikita Sergeyevich was most interested in this time was our building work and the projected merger with the *Broad Fields*.

"It's going through, is it?"

"It is," I answered.

We got the *Broad Fields* chairman, Atamanjuk, and Levitsky, their Party secretary, to come over, and held a conference right there in the yard. When he had seen that we had no points of difference, Nikita Sergeyevich counselled:

"Only don't be in too great a hurry. Wind up the agricultural year, report to general meetings of your members, and then do the merging."

Another piece of advice he gave us was not

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"Only don't be in too great a hurry. Wind up the agricultural year, report to general meetings of your members, and then do the merging."

Another piece of advice he gave us was not

to upset the existing crop rotation if it could possibly be avoided.

We did just as he said. Wound up the agricultural year, settled all the year's accounts with the membership and held meetings of each of the two collectives. Then we called a joint meeting of the members of both, elected a new management board, and now we are all working together.

So, in its 28th year, the *Gains of October* ceased to be a small collective.

THE TEAM FOREMAN HAS FULL POWERS

I don't imagine there is anyone who would set out to prove that twice two makes five. That's in arithmetic. But in the organization of kolkhoz work there were people who did try to prove something like that, and I daresay there still are a few here and there. These people insisted that the basic production unit in the collective must be not the team but a smaller unit, the section.

I recall a meeting of the Collective-Farm Council at which Comrade Doronin, Secretary of the Kursk Regional Party Committee, took up the cudgels for the section system. He sang the praises of the section system of prewar days. It had proved much superior to the team system, he declared, and so the Kursk Region leaders had decided to introduce it again after the war.

I still have a copy of Comrade Doronin's memorandum on the subject. He describes how this system of "organization" operated in 1945. Here is what he says:

"A record (Form 1) was drawn up for each section.

"The land area assigned to the section (by crop) was entered in Rubric 1.

"The section's gross harvest (by crop) was entered in Rubric 4.

"Each section harvested its own fields.

"In stacking, the same principle was observed. If the section's area was a large one, it made its own ricks; otherwise the grain was built into common ricks, but with layers or bands of straw between the sheaves of the different sections, so as to keep them separate."

Later on Comrade Doronin set out to abolish the team altogether. At a regional conference of front-rank farmers in December 1947 he showed that he had no use for the team by asking: "Do you think it is worth while having team foremen?"

The instructions from the Kursk Regional Committee were for the sections to handle the whole agricultural cycle, and even to make the grain deliveries to the state, as separate, independent units.

I can just imagine what our kolkhoz would have turned into if we had followed Comrade

Doronin's "methods." At that time we had 180 people doing the field work. Splitting them into sections of 10, we would have had 18 sections, 18 tiny production units.

Each of these diminutive units would have had to be assigned its own land area, draught animals and tools. As we then had 24 horses, 16 oxen and 15 ploughs, it would have worked out at a horse and a third and a fraction of an ox and a plough to a section.

Two MTS tractors were working our fields, and we had an electric thresher and other big machines. How would they have catered to these 18 production units? And were we too to have separated the different sections' harvest with "layers or bands of straw"?

The harmfulness of the section system is quite obvious. It would in effect atomize the collectives, would throw us back to ancient outdated ways of working the land.

It's another matter having sections on industrial crops like sugar beets, sun-flowers sorghum, maize and potatoes. For these we have had sections, have them now and shall have as long as a hand tool like the hoe persists.

I am convinced that the hoe has all but finished its career. Even now it is being ousted by the cultivator and other tractor-drawn implements. And the time is not very distant when the mechanization of labour-consuming farm jobs

will be so far advanced that hand labour will no longer be used—and then the sections too will disappear.

The basic production unit in our collective has been the team. It is thanks to the team system that we have been able to make efficient use of the tractors and other up-to-date machines with which the Government so plentifully supplies us. And only the team is strong enough to cope with the exacting tasks that must be accomplished if we are to secure further increases in yields.

After the merger with the *Broad Fields* we formed three field teams, and a fourth team to handle all fodder work. All our draught animals and tilling implements are assigned to these four teams.

The team foreman is in full charge. At first the management board used to restrict his powers. It had an assignment book for each team in which it put down what the team was to accomplish during the week, how many people were to be detailed to which job, etc.

But soon we gave up this petty supervision, because what it amounts to is that the board does what the foreman is supposed to do and exempts him from responsibility. We gave the foreman complete freedom of action. Let him distribute his forces any way he likes, as long as the work gets done. And this produced good results

right away. The foreman realizes that he is in charge; he knows that no one will do his job for him, and so he does it himself.

Our kolkhoz has a tractor team from Talnoye MTS No. 2 working for it. The team has four tractors: a powerful caterpillar machine, a KTZ and two Universals.

Before, this tractor team worked for two collectives, ours and the *Broad Fields*. This often led to inefficiency: the tractors wasted time and fuel on unnecessary trips. Now the tractor team works for a single collective, and that is another advantage of the merger.

A few words about the fodder team. This is a very necessary thing; no kolkhoz can do without it. To develop livestock farming properly and make it more productive, you need plenty of good feeding stuffs.

Before the merger, we had a fodder section—a special section for this one thing, like those working on industrial crops.

Now instead of a section we have a team, for there are 40 people in it, and what sort of section is that? But it isn't the name that matters.

What does our fodder team do? It works 112 hectares of land set aside for growing feeding stuffs—7 fields of 16 hectares each.

These 7 fields have a crop rotation of their own, as follows: fields 1, 2 and 3—perennial grasses; field 4—spring wheat; field 5—root

crops; field 6—"green conveyor," and field 7—oats with a mingling of grasses.

The "green conveyor" is something we have had for a long time. It is a field divided into five plots which are sown at 5 different times, so that the animals should have green feed all through the summer.

Sixteen hectares of "green conveyor" is not a great deal for the amount of stock we have. And so in addition we intercrop the orchard with pumpkins and marrows.

Here let me mention a rather important little point that we have had to deal with.

At first people did not want to work in the fodder section. "What sort of job is that?" they said. "You have no chance to earn any extras."

We talked the matter over at a general meeting and decided to put root crop cultivation on a par with the cultivation of sugar beets. For exceeding standard yields of root crops members get extra pay out of the management board's sugar reserve.

This has produced good results. Last year, for instance, one of our women, Fedora Kirilenko, greatly exceeded the regulation yield of feed carrots. She got 130 kilograms of sugar for doing it.

People are as willing now to work in the fodder team as anywhere else.

We have 5 other teams: fruit and vegetable growing, stock raising, building, the auxiliary

departments team (which operates the power plant, the workshops, the sawmill, the oil press and the flour mill) and the transport team. The latter is made up of the 5 chauffeurs and the 10 men assigned permanently to our 5 lorries to handle the loads.

SOURCES OF KOLKHOZ PROSPERITY

The land is an inexhaustible source of riches for the collective and of prosperity for its members. In 1949 our income from crops was 663,445 rubles, or about 62 per cent of our total returns.

Our land is truly a generous Mother Earth. Yet for our neighbours of the *Broad Fields*, this same land, rich and fertile, was a grudging step-mother. Their crops brought them only 113,945 rubles. You ask why? Low yields—that was the main cause.

Take the orchard. Ours was not a large one, only 15 hectares. But these 15 hectares brought 251,883 rubles into our kolkhoz treasury that summer. Now at the *Broad Fields* they showed no interest in fruit growing. And the figure under "Orchard proceeds" in their annual report was 913 rubles.

Or take vegetable growing. Our return from it was 42,085 rubles. The *Broad Fields* people didn't trouble much about their truck gardens, and their income from this item was only 3,883 rubles.

That was how matters stood in our two collectives with crop growing, the major branch of farming.

But all that is over and done with. We have joined forces now and we declare that in this big new *Gains of October* things will be even better than in the old. There is twice as much land as before—1,200 hectares. And so the crops, and the returns, must double too. At the very least, our grain, sugar, vegetables and fruit must bring us a million a year.

But besides crops there are the cows and the pigs, the sheep and the fowls. Over at the *Broad Fields*, I'm sorry to say, they were more prone to look after their household animals than after the kolkhoz stock. And while they are our own members now, I hope they'll pardon my citing our respective returns from stock raising in 1949: the *Gains of October* figure was 146,785 rubles, the *Broad Fields*, only 27,254—little more than a sixth of ours.

In this matter of stock raising we shall, I know, have difficulties at the start. But I feel confident that, having become members of our collective, the *Broad Fields* folk will now work the way we do.

A little while ago I decided to give a little talk for them. I started out something like this:

"Crops and stock raising are the two main branches of kolkhoz farming, and they comple-

ment each other. Stock raising can't make good progress unless cultivation is in proper shape, and cultivation for its part depends a good deal on well-developed livestock farming. . . ."

"We know all that," somebody called out at this point.

"What do you know?"

"Why, that plenty of stock means meat, sausage, butter, wool, money and manure for the land."

"Then why didn't you do anything about it?"

"Didn't have the 'doings' to do it with," came the answer, which provoked general hilarity.

What this meant was money. It takes money to buy pedigree stock and to put up quarters for the animals. But the *Broad Fields*, with its modest returns, could allocate no more than some 30,000 rubles for the purpose. And that wouldn't take you very far.

The conversation continued roughly like this:

"And why were your returns so small?"

"Because yields were low."

"Why were they low?"

"Well, we didn't tend the land right, didn't manure it enough. . . ."

Most of the *Broad Fields* people realized that they had landed in a vicious circle and must strike out along some new path. This new path they found in the merger, in bigger-scale farming and mechanization.

I think the time has come for other small collectives to consider the matter too. The benefits of amalgamation are evident even at this early date: since we became a big kolkhoz, we have been able to do things in a bigger way.

We are already building a large new cowhouse to hold 100 animals. It will stand where the *Broad Fields* office, etc., used to be. This is a big advantage: the site is close to the summer pasture, and, more important still, it's a stone's throw from the sugar refinery. So the fodder is close at hand, and much carting will be saved.

Up to now our power plant supplied the *Broad Fields* with current only for the homes. Now we are electrifying all production processes there too. That will be another big advantage.

For three years we put money into the power plant—now it is repaying. Last year it brought us 148,000 rubles.

People often ask me, in letters and in conversation, how our collective managed to become a "millionaire," with annual returns of a million and more, on only 600 hectares of land. And what I tell them is this. A million is a lot of money, of course, and may seem utterly beyond reach. But even a million is made up of little kopeks, and kopeks grow all around us: in the fields, in the truck gardens, in the orchard, the cattle houses and the pond. The thing to do is collect them and build up the million.

Of our main sources of income I have already spoken. Let me deal briefly with some of the secondary ones, which have brought us tens of thousands of rubles.

I have mentioned rhubarb before this. It grows like a weed, with next to no tending. Our women stew it and use it for pie-stuffing and to give an acid flavour to *borshch*.

Our fruitgrower and wine maker Makar Gotsik decided to explore the possibilities of rhubarb and learnt to produce wine from it. That brings us money, and quite a lot of it too.

Then again, rhubarb seed is much in demand. Gotsik has received nearly 1,000 letters—from Murmansk, Siberia, the Altai, Sakhalin, Kamchatka, and in fact from all over the Union—asking for it. And the kopeks we got for this seed also mounted up to a tidy sum—over, 7,000 rubles.

A substantial source of income is beekeeping: we have 110 hives now. And besides supplying us with honey, the bees pollinate the plants in field and orchard.

In 1949 we made a three-and-a-half hectare pond, put some fry in it, and we expect soon to be getting returns from that too.

The workshops, the sawmill, the oil press and our other sidelines also make their contribution to the balance sheet. A thing like the cartwright shop may not actually bring in any money, but it saves us many a kopek, for we can make our

carts ourselves instead of paying to have it done.

And one other thing. In any matter you care to name; it's proper management that counts. Take fruitgrowing again. There are collectives with 40 and 60 hectares of orchard. An orchard like that is pure gold. But there are some "managers" who contrive to turn gold into dung.

I have told you what returns we got from our 15-hectare orchard. Makar Gotsik and his assistants don't let a single apple, a single berry go to waste. Part Gotsik sells, part he dries, and the rest he uses to make wine.

Every collective has many sources of wealth. It is just a matter of tapping them, and then the little springs will well up to make big rivers and lakes.

A CANDID TALK WITH AMERICAN AND OTHER "CIVILIZERS"

As usual, on the October Revolution anniversary we also celebrated the birthday of our collective—the twenty-seventh one this time.

For us the occasion is always an especially joyous one: after all, many of our members were among the pioneers of collective farming in the Ukraine.

On this twenty-seventh anniversary I recalled our great Stalin's famous article of 1929, "A Year of Great Change" ending with these words:

“We are advancing full steam ahead along the path of industrialization—to Socialism, leaving behind the age-long ‘Russian’ backwardness. We are becoming a country of metal, a country of automobiles, a country of tractors. And when we have put the U.S.S.R. on an automobile, and the muzhik on a tractor, let the esteemed capitalists, who boast so much of their ‘civilization,’ try to overtake us! We shall see which countries may then be ‘classified’ as backward and which as advanced.”

In those days the capitalist gentry called these words of our leader’s a utopia, a fantastic dream. They laughed at them. But there was one thing they forgot: that he laughs best who laughs last.

Yet they would have done well to remember it. Suppose we recall, Messrs. Capitalists, what things used to be like and what they came to be like afterwards.

Our great leader Lenin dreamed of 100,000 tractors. But by the end of the second Stalin five-year plan, there were close to 500,000 tractors in our country’s fields—and, mind you, not those Fordsons of yours that just about did the work of our curve-horned oxen, but powerful, first-class machines.

Until 1929 we were still buying tractors and automobiles from you. But by 1937 we were already in a position to export tractors and automobiles ourselves.

By 1940, we had several times as many tractors as all the capitalist countries of Europe put together. And in our fleet of combine-harvesters—and also in their production—we had outstripped your vaunted America as well and advanced to first place in the world.

These are all facts. They went very much against your grain, and so you set that mad dog Hitler upon us. That is a fact too.

But it didn't work out your way. We emerged from the war even stronger than we had been. We are growing, gaining in strength, forging ahead all the time.

Before the war you liked to boast that your America had the biggest tractor fleet in the world. Granted that it was the biggest—then. But what use did you make of it?

Take a look at the statistics of your own Department of Agriculture. They show that only half of your 1940 crop area was ploughed, and even less—only one third—planted by tractor.

While our tractors in that same year ploughed three quarters of the country's total crop area and planted more than half.

That was in 1940. And in recent years, more than 90 per cent of all the fallow ploughing in our collectives (both summer and autumn) has been done by tractor.

Your "Voice of America" goes into raptures about American farms and represents your farm-

ers as living in a sort of heaven on earth. But this heaven of yours is uncommonly like the one of which our poet Taras Shevchenko said: "In that heaven, a hell I spied. . . ."

Perhaps you do not read your own census returns? Then let me quote them for your benefit. They state that only 32 per cent of your farms have tractors.

So much for your heaven on earth. I must say I don't envy your farmers.

For the Soviet collective farmer the tractor is a blessing. We have calculated that our tractors and combines relieve more than 10,000,000 people of arduous toil. And for our Land of Socialism this is a very great thing. For we need vast numbers of people to do other kinds of work. But for the men who work your land the machine is a curse. It throws them out into the street. Every tractor that comes to your farms robs several men of their livelihood and starts them on a weary job-hunt.

Those are facts—just try to disprove them. For such is the jungle law of capitalism.

As a result of that jungle law, crisis grips you by the throat and millions of workers and poor farmers are doomed to want and starvation.

Perhaps you will tell me why it was that your Secretary of Agriculture proposed reducing the wheat area in 1950 by 17 per cent. Was it in order

to improve the lot of the workers and farmers? Oh no! Every schoolboy over here can tell you that the only gainers by such things are the capitalists, who are out to coin money out of human suffering: the less wheat there is in the country, the dearer it will be, and the more profit it will bring the big concerns that sell it.

We in the Land of Socialism are adding to our crop areas every year. Under the postwar Stalin five-year plan alone, our cereal plantings increased by more than 20 per cent. Catch up with us—if you can!

Our tractor industry has been not only rehabilitated after the war, but greatly expanded.

We have indeed put our country on an automobile. Every collective has a couple of lorries, and the *Gains of October* has 5, besides my passenger car.

The prophetic words spoken by our far-seeing leader twenty years ago have become a reality. Comrade Stalin said we were becoming a country of automobiles, a country of tractors. Now we *have become* such a country.

The whole world can see that we are thriving, flourishing, forging onward, while you are heading for the abyss.

Guided by our glorious Bolshevik Party, led by our great Stalin, we are proudly and confidently advancing, full steam ahead, to communism!

It was 1950—the last year of the postwar Stalin five-year plan.

On March 12 the people of the Uman Constituency re-elected me to represent them in the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

Returning home late that night, I saw our whole community, Talnoye and the granite quarries above the Gorny Tikich flooded with electricity.

That was our little electric sun shining for us. And it was not only light that it provided. Our power station had taken over all the arduous work that used to be such a burden. We already had 40 electric motors, and the power was used on some 60 different kinds of work. It released a great deal of labour and made it possible to put people on other jobs.

Every farmer knows what hard work it is pitching up the straw to the ricks. We introduced a transporter for this purpose. It was driven at first by oxen, later by electricity—but even then it was a pretty primitive affair. Now we have installed an electropneumatic transporter: along a tube half a metre in diameter and some thirty metres long, the straw is carried from the thresher right onto the rick. It has freed 10 people for other work.

Before, it took 8 people to run our seed sorters, now it takes 2. It's the same with the winnowers:

4 people used to work around them, only 2 are needed now.

One very burdensome business was carting water. Two carters and 4 horses were kept busy doing it. Now the water is pumped by an electric motor, which is tended by a single girl and does not take up all her time either: she fills the tank on the water tower, then goes off to do something else.

Electrification has released 6 people at the oil press, 2 at the mill, 4 in the creamery. Electric motors have been installed in the workshops and cattle houses, and they power lathes, drive ventilators and chop the feed for the beasts.

But that is not the only advantage of electricity and of mechanization generally. Thanks to this mighty force we are able to plan the work correctly, to spread it more evenly over the whole year.

In the old days of individual farming, the peasant used to spend most of the winter lolling by the stove. There was nothing for him to do. While in the summer, and particularly in July, August and September, he would work 16 and 18 hours a day.

The picture is not very different in collectives with little mechanization. I needn't go far afield to find an example. In our own kolkhoz in 1946, before we had the power plant, 8 per cent of all the work-day units put in fell to the first quarter, 32 per cent to the second, 46 to the third and 14 to the fourth.

Now the position has changed radically. A great many jobs are done in the winter, so that in the summer our members do not sweat and strain beyond their strength. In 1949, the first quarter accounted for 16 per cent of all the work done, the second for 30, the third for 32, and the fourth for 22.

That was how things were before the merger. How would they shape after it? Would the *Broad Fields* drag us down? At first we had considerable fears for the plan we had mapped out, particularly in the matter of yields. About the *Gains of October* land I did not worry, I knew it would not let us down. But what about the *Broad Fields* land?

The first thing we did was to reinforce the leadership of the *Broad Fields* teams, and next we went all out for scientific methods. We had the people to do it, too, for there were three agronomists in the collective now, all three, oddly enough, named Ivan: our old agronomist, Ivan Belous, who headed our agronomical laboratory; Ivan Churpita, who after graduating from the agricultural training school in Talnoye had come back to the *Gains of October* and taken charge of combating pests; and Ivan Gava, a last-year student at the Uman agricultural institute, who worked for us in the summer, ranking as senior agronomist.

I'm not going to describe how we went about the planting in the spring and how we tended the

crops in the summer, but will only say that we continued to hold the district challenge banner all along the line. And when it came to the harvesting, we proved first in that too: we had the crop in very early indeed, and completed the grain deliveries by July 28.

The district's second challenge banner was in the hands of our neighbours, the *Voroshilov* collective. We have an emulation contest with the *Voroshilov* people, and in quite a few things they were close on our heels, not to say more.

HARVEST FESTIVAL IN POLAND

Our 28th Harvest Home was an especially happy one. Never before in all its existence had our collective had such a big grain harvest.

Just as we were making the preliminary overall estimate of the harvest returns, I was invited to go with a Soviet farmers' delegation to the Harvest Festival in Poland. Having been in that country before, I was particularly interested to see how our friends there were working and what progress they had made.

Our delegation numbered 43, including 7 people from the Ukraine. We went by train, and at the very first station over the border we found that several hundred Polish peasants had turned out to welcome us with the traditional bread and salt. The first words we heard here were:

"Long live Stalin! Long live peace!"

Many of the people had brought white doves which they now released. Beating their wings, the birds soared upward over the station.

We watched them spellbound. It was an unforgettable sight: so many doves of peace. Without any fancy speeches, very simply and clearly, the Polish peasants had shown that they stand with us on guard for peace, for friendship among the nations.

"Welcome to Polish soil, dear friends!" they said. "Feel yourselves at home here. We are with you for all time; and now that we stand together, no black force can affright us. Sooner will our Vistula and your Volga and Dnieper reverse their course than the mad dogs from overseas succeed in their foul schemes!"

And every speaker cried:

"Long Live Stalin! Long Live Peace!"

To our Polish brothers, after all they have gone through, our country and our great Stalin are a guarantee and earnest of peace for their land also.

By evening we were in Warsaw. The streets were ablaze with light and full of life. Cars, motorbuses and trolley-buses raced past, tram bells rang and clanged. The parks and gardens were thronged with young people.

When the news got about that a Soviet delegation was in the city, a crowd gathered outside

the Bristol Hotel, where we put up. People acclaimed us heartily, and the pretty Warsaw girls presented us with flowers.

We spent three days in the Polish capital, seeing the sights and visiting museums, theatres and factories.

The city is being rebuilt with amazing speed. Only 18 months before, I had seen solid masses of ruins, thousands of burnt and gutted houses with gaping black holes for windows. Now there were whole new streets—and very handsome ones—house windows were gaily lit, and out of them looked smiling people and children's happy faces.

The life of the capital, as of the whole country, is governed by one aim—fulfilling the six-year plan launched in 1950.

The puffed-up Polish gentry of the old days used to drive about in cars of American, British, German, French and various other makes—but Polish-made cars there were none. The new Poland will soon have its own cars: a big automobile works is going up fast on the outskirts of Warsaw.

Poland never had a tractor industry. The new, democratic Poland already has one. We visited the Ursus tractor works, where dozens of first-class tractors come off the assembly line every day. The people at this factory already work in socialist fashion: department vies with

department and team with team. Many workers have undertaken Peace Shifts and are topping output quotas as a special effort for peace.

One thing we liked very much here was the factory nursery. It's like a palace, it is so beautiful and well-appointed, and the mothers of the 120 little tots can work with an easy mind, knowing that their youngsters will be properly fed, taken care of and kept amused.

As we left the nursery, we were thinking: a state that takes such care of its children is indeed following the socialist path.

The day before the Harvest Festival, we visited the headquarters of the Central Committee of the United Workers' Party, and during this visit we learnt some facts and figures on the state and prospects of Poland's agriculture.

By the end of the six years covered by the plan, aggregate agricultural output is to increase by 50 per cent over 1949, and the amount of animal produce by all of 68. There will be 61,000 tractors working the fields by then, while the total of farm machines will increase fourfold.

Agricultural production is going up every year. The average grain yield per hectare was over 15 centners in 1950 as against 13 in 1949.

Still higher are the yields in the new agricultural cooperatives. Many of these in 1950 registered 20 and more centners per hectare.

The Harvest Festival was held in Lublin. From our grandstand in the main square, next to the government stand, we saw a most impressive spectacle: 150,000 peasants, both cooperative farm members and otherwise, had gathered for the occasion. Many Lubliners were there too. The square was decorated with red-and-white and green flags, with wreaths of wheatears, with flowers and streamers. The delegations from the different provinces and counties each had a tent, and outside every tent music played and people sang and danced. The Polish farmers showed that they are good not only at working on their liberated land, but at making merry too.

Our delegation of Soviet collective farmers was greeted with enthusiastic cheers and applause. Time and again the whole great assemblage chanted the words most precious to peace-loving folk:

“Stalin—peace! Stalin—peace! Stalin—peace!”

At 10 a.m. Speaker of the Sejm Kowalski, Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz and representatives of the various Polish parties and public organizations arrived. Their appearance on the stand was greeted with singing from a tremendous massed choir.

At noon there began the “March of Joy,” as the Poles called this vast demonstration. Streaming in columns along Lublin’s streets, all the

delegations filed one after another past the government stand.

It was indeed a demonstration of joy. The peasants poured through the streets with songs, acclaiming the new life. As the delegations neared the stands, hundreds of doves—doves of peace—fluttered upwards. The air rang with cries in honour of Generalissimo Stalin and President Bierut:

“Stalin! Bierut! Peace!”

Once again the peasants of Poland declared for peace, for the well-being and happiness of the people.

PIONEERS OF SOCIALISM IN THE POLISH COUNTRYSIDE

After the festivities in Lublin our delegation was invited to visit rural communities in various parts of the country. I headed a group which went to the Polish Maritime Region.

It was a warm, clear day when the blue bus in which we were making the trip left the noisy streets of the capital behind it and rolled out into the open.

Looking out of the windows, we saw fields on either side, with little copses here and there. The grain was already in. People were digging the potatoes, some were still putting in the winter corn, and the sugar beet harvest was starting.

Former manor-farm buildings we passed were now the headquarters of machine and tractor stations, agricultural collectives and state farms.

Our guide, a Ministry of Agriculture official, told us with pride:

"This spring our republic had 79 machine and tractor stations. By harvest time there were 120, and now we've got 155."

"How many tractors do they have?" inquired one of our Byelorussian delegates, MTS director Efim Zhukovsky.

"Over three and a half thousand," our guide replied, and added: "That isn't a great deal, of course, but soon there will be more. Have you seen our new Ursus plant? It alone will provide us with about 5,000 tractors by next spring. And on top of that we'll buy some from you and from Czechoslovakia."

At some of the machine and tractor stations and state farms we saw Soviet harvester combines from the Rostov works—they towered like giants among the other machinery. Tractors, combines and other modern farm machines have ceased to be a rarity in Poland, they are becoming a mighty weapon in the Polish peasant's fight for socialism.

As in the Soviet Union, all the main agricultural machinery is concentrated in the MTS, which are called POM in Polish, meaning State

Machinery Depot. The first POM we visited was in a little place called Lubosz not far from the town of Bydgoszcz. Its director, Feliks Rabega, introduced us to his mechanics, tractor drivers and agronomists. Some of the drivers were already Stakhanovites: driver Mazin was registering 196 per cent of quota, a girl driver, Helena Staniukowna, had 184 per cent to her credit, and Zalewski, the youngest driver in the place, was doing 175.

The POM had 22 tractors, more than half of them Polish ones from the Ursus plant. They were working the land of 7 collectives and of individual farmers as well.

The Polish tractor drivers literally showered us with questions, the main targets of this bombardment being our own "mechanizers"—Efim Zhukovsky, the MTS director I have mentioned, and tractor team leader Galina Lazareva. They were questioned without end:

"How is the work at your MTS organized? What are the performance quotas per tractor? How deep do you plough? How are the drivers paid?"

To give a better idea of this conversation, let me quote an item that appeared in the Bydgoszcz newspaper *Ziemia Pomorska* under the headline "Galya and Hela."

"Galya is Galina Lazareva, leader of a tractor team in a Soviet MTS near Kuibyshev.

"Hela is Helena Staniukowna, tractor driver at the Polish POM in Lubosz.

"With arms linked, the two girls had a long talk, comparing notes on their work and life. Galina, though only 22, is already a driver of experience, and she told her Polish colleague how she goes about her job and gets such good results.

"‘And what sort of machine do you run?’ she asked Hela for her part. ‘A Zetor, is it? And how much do you plough in a shift?’

"‘Three hectares,’ Hela told her. ‘The Zetor is only a little tractor, you know.’

"Galya nodded agreement. Yes, she knew it was smaller than her Soviet tractor, on which she did 9 hectares a shift. On learning that Hela’s tractor only worked one shift, she remarked:

"‘You don’t get all you can out of it. We have two drivers to every tractor, so that it works two shifts. That way my tractor ploughs 18 hectares a day.’”

Informal discussions like these went on until evening and continued at the supper to which our kind Lubosz hosts invited us.

Our 10 days’ trip took us to several more machine and tractor stations and to many agricultural collectives and state farms.

On the way to Gdańsk we stopped at a village called Mało Nebrowo. Like most in this area, it is a small village, 39 households in all. Seventeen of them joined together in the autumn of 1949 to form a collective.

We were welcomed with bread and salt, flowers and warm words of greeting. Then they took us to see the farm. But before describing what we saw in Nebrowo, let me tell you about the way Polish agricultural collectives generally are organized. They fall into three types.

The first type is rather like the Joint Cultivation Societies that we once used to have. The land is thrown together and is ploughed and planted collectively. But the harvesting and threshing each member does for himself.

The second type is more like our kolkhoz. The ploughing, planting and harvesting are all done collectively. But there is a difference too: only 60 per cent of the returns is distributed on the workday unit system; the rest is shared out among the different households according to the amount of land they brought with them.

In collectives of the third type, the rules are like our kolkhoz rules on practically every point. The only difference is that 15 per cent of the returns is shared out according to stock and implements contributed. The rest is distributed on the workday unit system.

The last type has had the greatest appeal of the three: we learnt at the Ministry of Agriculture that there are 173 collectives of the first kind, 490 of the second and 925 of the third.

The Nebrowo collective is of the third kind too. Its land area is 236 hectares, 50 hectares of which is meadow and pastureland and 3 hectares is occupied by an orchard. There are 13 horses, 6 seed drills, 3 binders, 4 reapers, 3 threshers, 2 chaffcutters and 8 wagons, as well as ploughs and harrows. Having taken over the "home farm" of some squire who made off to England or America, the collective has from the start had good sheds for its animals and tools.

The government bank granted the young community a loan which enabled them to buy 39 cows and a bull. It offered them a loan to buy implements with as well, but they declined it: they have enough tools for the time being, and more elaborate machinery is supplied from the POM.

The first collective harvest was a very creditable one—over 17 centners per hectare on the average, and as much as 30 in some of the rye fields. But their chairman was not satisfied. On hearing that the wheat yield in 1950 at the *Gatns of October* was 32.9 centners per hectare, he declared:

"We'll have yields like that too! Real socialist yields! Just wait till we get going!"

The Nebrowo people asked us:

"Do please say frankly what we do right and what we do wrong. Tell us where we make mistakes, and what is the quickest way to get over them."

The Nebrowo collective does have faults and failings, of course, because it is still very young. It has its difficulties too, but they are difficulties due to growth. What the Polish collectives lack most of all is skilled personnel. A training program has been started, but for the present there are not enough agricultural and breeding experts and experienced organizers.

We had to answer questions on an infinite variety of subjects. And often enough we would roll up our sleeves and show "how it is done."

The one who was kept busiest was Hero of Socialist Labour Maria Skornyakova, breeding expert at a kolkhoz in the Yaroslavl Region. The dairy farm at Nebrowo had only been set up recently. The cows were well housed, but tending methods were just what they were on the individual farms, and so the animals did not yield very much. Maria suggested more efficient ways of running the establishment and improved feed rations for the beasts, and demonstrated up-to-date milking methods.

Besides the agricultural collectives, Poland has another form of socialist agriculture: the state farms, which are organized roughly on the same lines as ours.

The Maritime Region has, proportionately, more state farms than other parts of Poland. In the Szczeciń Province, for example, there are 58, with some 450 departments. Add to this the collectives, of which there are 191 in the province, and it will be seen that the socialist sector is already pretty solid here.

Most of the state farms are doing well. They have expert forces and are well supplied with machinery.

A good example is a state farm in the Gdańsk Province—I forgot its name—on what used to be the estate of some German baron. Here there are 13 departments, and also 2 stills and a starch factory. The farm has good pedigree stock and milk yields are quite high, but where it has done best is in pig breeding: some of the sows weigh as much as 400 kilograms.

We also visited 2 farming collectives in the Starogródzk County in Western Poland. One of them, in the village of Tiwnica, bears the name of the writer Wanda Wasilewska. This collective, which is of the third type, is a small one—16 households—but it is making a good showing. The 1950 yield of rye was 18 centners and of wheat 22 centners per hectare.

The other collective, *Common Tillage* in the village of Kania, stands out because, by Polish standards, it is enormous. In the summer it had

16 member households; but by the time we arrived another 34 had joined. Its land area was by now over 1,000 hectares, and it had 80 cows and a lot of other stock.

Lastly, we paid a visit to an agrotechnical school. This school is housed in a castle that once belonged to a brother of German Chancellor Bismarck. The haughty Herr Bismarcks would no doubt turn in their graves to know that their family castle is being used to train personnel for the new, democratic Poland.

The school has been in existence since 1947. At first the course was two years, now it has been extended to four, and 120 young men and girls are attending.

As they took us back to our bus, these coming agronomists said:

"Give our warmest regards to our friends the Soviet Komsomols. Tell them that we try to be like them in our studies, and in our work it will be the same."

And, like a vow, they chorused:

"Long Live Polish-Soviet Friendship!"

"Long Live Peace!"

"Long Live Stalin!"

On September 26 all our groups of delegates returned to Warsaw. Here we had some talks with Central Committee functionaries of the United Workers' Party and members of the Sejm and told them our impressions.

The night before we left, President Bierut gave an informal supper for our delegation.

Heartfelt thanks to our Polish brothers for their sincere friendship and hospitality!

VISITING A KOLKHOZ NEAR MOSCOW

Let me take you back a little way.

It was the lovely month of June, and we were cutting the clover and stacking the fragrant new-mown hay, when some unexpected visitors arrived. There were twelve of them altogether, and one of the twelve was Hero of Socialist Labour Pyotr Azhirkov, chairman of the *Fighter* collective in the Bronnitsy District, Moscow Region. I had met him a good few times when in Moscow, and in the spring of 1949 we had been in Poland together.

"We've come visiting," he informed me. "Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov advised us to take a look at the way you people live and work."

"You do us an honour," I said. "Please make yourselves at home."

The party was made up of kolkhoz chairmen, team foremen and several agricultural experts. They had been to the Irpen flood-plain, to Cherkassy and to Shpola, and were planning to go on to Makar Posmitny's collective in the Odessa Region.

They studied everything very closely and took an interest in the minutest details. Seeing some sacks of salt by a haystack, Azhirkov inquired:

"What's the salt here for?"

I explained that we salted our hay slightly. It tastes better that way, and the animals eat more of it.

Our visitors pulled out notebooks and took down how much salt we put in and how moist the hay has to be when you do it.

I don't know what else they thought worth copying from us, but they seemed well pleased with the visit and praised our grain and beet crops, our mechanization and our kolkhoz press (we put out a weekly wallnewspaper, and in addition a paper of wit and humour called *Kolkhoz Pepperbox*).

Shortly after, a session of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet was meeting and I went up to Moscow. When the session was over, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov, who was now at the Moscow Party Committee, asked a number of us kolkhoz chairmen to his office. Galina Burkatskaya of the Cherkassy District was there, Paraska Chukhno of the Zhitomir Region, Maria Lysenko of the Starchenkovski District, and others.

Nikita Sergeyevich received us very warmly, like old friends. He talked to us for a long time,

asking how we were getting on and what was new on our farms, and then he said:

"Why don't you pay a visit to some of the collectives around here? Go and take a look. At some you will be able to help with advice, and at others you may pick up useful ideas yourselves. We have some good collectives here, you know."

And so we went to various farms in the Moscow Region. The one Galina Burkatskaya and I visited was Pyotr Azhirkov's *Fighter*. I had long heard that the people there were doing a very good job with their livestock farming. And that is a fact, as a single figure will show: the milk yield per cow in 1949 was 4,694 kilograms.

A month later I learnt from the papers that in recognition of the high milk yields secured, Azhirkov himself, dairy farm manager Alexander Granatkin, breeding expert Fyodor Tarasov and veterinary Sergei Fadeyev had been awarded the Order of Lenin, and other decorations had gone to the dairymaids.

The *Fighter* land stretches along the Moscow River. The collective has much fine meadow and pastureland. It was hay harvest here now, and it pleased me to see that they had decided to try our method and were salting the hay when they stacked it.

We went about studying the way they did things. It was their dairy farm that impressed me

most. The milking was done by electricity, there were automatic drinking fountains in the cow houses, and the feedstuffs were prepared and delivered mechanically. Still, we already had much the same devices on our own farm, so I concentrated mostly on the way they made up the feed rations and on the milking methods, and learnt a good deal that was new and useful. We have taken quite a few pointers from them in these things.

Another feature that attracted my notice was the way they had fixed up their poultry farm. There are currant and raspberry bushes dotted all over the fowl yard, and this is useful in two ways: pecking at the berries and leaves, the chickens absorb vitamins; and, more important still, they don't get overheated in the summer, as they can hide under the bushes from the sun.

We are going to do this too. This very spring we shall plant our fowl yard with currant and other berry bushes.

It was good to learn what high yields of grain our brother collective farmers around Moscow have learnt to raise on their humid podzol soils. The overall 1947 cereal yield of team foreman Nikolai Kostryachkin, for instance, was 28 centners per hectare, with the rye yield topping 30. In recognition of these achievements Kostryachkin was made a Hero of Socialist Labour.

I can't say for sure who it was that first suggested an emulation agreement, but somebody did, and Azhirkov and Galina Burkatskaya signed an agreement the very same day.

The Moscow Region collective farmers are very prosperous and go-ahead people. Take the matter of orchards. There were hardly any in these parts before. Now they are appearing, and the *Fighter*, for one, has 20 hectares of fruit trees already bearing. And what marvellous wild strawberries the *Fighter* people raise—6 whole hectares of them! I have seen plenty of berry culture in my time, but nothing to equal that.

Azhirkov and his fellow members gave us a splendid reception, treating us like real friends.

A few days later, there was another conference at the Moscow Party Committee offices. The chairmen of a number of recently amalgamated collectives in the Moscow Region were invited to attend, and we Ukrainian kolkhoz chairmen spoke at this meeting too. We said what we had found to admire in the collectives hereabouts, and what criticisms we had to make.

When I was winding up, Nikita Sergeyevich asked:

"Why don't you tell about your practice of salting the hay? We'd all like to hear about it."

He must have heard about this from one of the Moscow Region farmers who came to see us. I described the method in detail.

"Fine," Nikita Sergeyevich said. "But we won't let you off as easily as that. You must write up your method for our newspapers."

I did that too.

AROUND THE NEW YEAR TREE

It was a very good saying of Felix Dzerzhinsky's that if he had to start his life all over again, he would live it just as he had done. . . .

We were having a party in the kolkhoz club to see in the New Year 1951. I had bought a lot of decorations in Kiev, and our New Year tree was alive with red, green and orange lights and glistened with gold and silver.

A few of us—a section of the management board, some of the Party members—happened to gather around the tree a little before the festivities were actually due to start. Someone switched off the overhead light, and only the little coloured bulbs on the tree twinkled in the gloom.

Sitting there, veteran "communards" like Nikita Konfedrat, my wife and myself looked back and asked ourselves: had we lived our lives as we should have done?

Our twenty-eight kolkhoz years filed past before our eyes and ranged themselves under the tree. And five of them, the last five, were, I thought, the best of the lot. . . .

I recalled the Party meeting at which we had drafted our postwar five-year plan. Today the five years were up. How had we made out?

The crop targets we had set ourselves for 1950 had been 24 centners of grain and 250 of sugar beets per hectare. The actual figures we had to show were 24.2 centners for grain and 281.5 for beets.

Along with the other things, someone had hung a little wreath of wheatears on the tree, and you couldn't have thought of a better decoration. Wheat had gloriously crowned our kolkhoz five-year plan. The average yield for the whole wheat area was 32.9 centners, and on a tract of 148 hectares, it was as much as 36.

Glancing up again at the tree, I saw some papier-mâché goldfish swimming among the green branches, and I was sorry there weren't any little cows, sheep and piglets—they would have been a fitting decoration for our tree.

What had we planned for the five years in livestock farming? A great deal, considering what the position in 1946 had been: we had undertaken to treble our cattle herd, double the number of sows and ewes, rebuild the pond, etc.

Sitting now around the New Year tree, we could be pleased with our showing. Our five-year program for livestock had been topped. Leonid Boiko, our breeding expert, named a few figures

(he could tell you in his sleep how matters stand in his department): the plan for cattle had been fulfilled 143 per cent, for sows, 124, for ewes, 114, and for fish, nearly 500: we now had 15 hectares of fish ponds.

And taking the amount of land, which is the only right yardstick to measure by, we on this last day of the five years had for every hundred hectares 37 head of cattle (including 11 milch cows), 40 pigs (including 5 sows), 27 sheep and 240 chickens.

Still, we are not satisfied with the productivity of our animals. With pigs we have done well enough: in 1950 we raised 115 pigs weighing as much as 160 kilograms apiece. The wool yield is also quite presentable, 3.8 kilograms per sheep. Our 20 mares produced 19 foals, which is not bad either.

But when it comes to milk yields, things are not so good. Our plan for 1950 was 3,000 litres per cow; what we actually got was 2,979. True, the figure is the highest in the whole Talnoye District, but we take no comfort from that.

It was the *Broad Fields* cows that let us down. Marina Vronskaya and our other veteran dairymaids got an average yield of 3,240 litres, but the *Broad Fields* figure was much lower.

However, we have laid the groundwork for a big increase in livestock productivity literally within the next few months. I have said before

this how much mechanization means, and it will help us in our livestock farming too.

In 1950 we put up a new cattle house and pigpen and reconstructed and modernized the ones we had. In the two largest, we have installed cableways with pulley-operated buckets to bring up the feed and take out the dung. We have also put in electric milkers and shears, while automatic drinking taps we have had for a long time.

We're giving a lot of attention to mechanizing the preparation of feedstuffs. Electrically driven straw and root slicers are something we had before. Now we have bought a maize sheller, a machine for handling coarse feeds and a universal grinder that reduces both grain feeds and hay to flour.

Best of all equipped with fodder machinery is our new pigpen. It's got a feed steaming plant and an electrically driven root washer, root slicer and potato pulper.

All this has made the animal tenders' job much easier, and the work gets done quickly, smoothly and with very little effort.

But is this the limit? No indeed. And sitting now around the New Year tree, we were thinking: "What else can we do? What other machines and improvements are needed to increase yields and labour productivity still more?"

Everyone suggested something—breeding expert Boiko in his department, agronomist Ivan

Gava in his, fruit grower Makar Gotsik and the others in theirs.

All these ideas and suggestions we must put into the collective's new five-year plan—a plan of fresh advance on the way to communism.

OUR NEIGHBOURS OF THE *VOROSHILOV* FARM

One day a brand-new Pobeda car pulled up at my door. I thought it must be somebody from the district centre or from Kiev. But instead it was our neighbour Ivan Artyomovich Remenets, chairman of the *Voroshilov* collective, that got out.

"Bought a car, have you?" I asked as we shook hands.

"As you see," he answered. "You think you'll drive around in a Pobeda and I won't?"

As long as I only had a Moskvich midget, Remenets put up with it. But when I got myself a Pobeda, that was too much, and he went and bought one too. He is positively a jealous rival of mine in some ways, and this is a wholesome rivalry, it makes both him and me keep up to the mark.

And, for that matter, who of us is without this spirit of rivalry? When the *Voroshilov* raised a bigger wheat crop than ours the year before last, we at the *Gains of October* were not a little

put out. "It simply means we didn't work well enough," our people said. And last year they went all out and beat the *Voroshilov* wheat yield

In 1950 the *Voroshilov* outdid us in lucerne seed. They registered 4.8 centners per hectare, and the proceeds were half a million.

On January 19, 1951, I paid Remenets a very special visit. For this was a red-letter day for him: he was nominated to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine.

The weather was warm, with a light fall of snow. The *Voroshilov* club was filled to overflowing. In the chair was Taras Boiko, the collective's best team foreman and a smart young fellow if ever there was one. He had done especially well with lucerne, securing more than 5 centners of seed per hectare.

"Ivan Artyomovich has been our chairman for 6 years," Taras said. "He has worked hard and well to make ours a front-rank collective. All honour to him! I am certain he will prove a worthy deputy to our socialist parliament, will justify the confidence we show in him."

And all the other speakers were proud and happy to be nominating their chairman. Until then the *Voroshilov*-ites had been a little jealous of our people because the *Gains of October* had a deputy of its own. Now they would have one too!

Then the District Party Secretary, Pavel Vasilyev, took the floor. He commended the *Voroshi-*

lov-ites for their big achievements in 1950, and they deserved it. Their average yield of all cereals was 22 centners, and of wheat, nearly 26. With livestock they had also done well, topping the three-year plan of increase and getting nearly two million rubles a year from their animals.

"It's a very good thing," Vasilyev said, "that you have an emulation contest with the *Gains of October*. And you've also done right to challenge the *Popuzhintsi*, the most backward farm in the district, to vie with you. You'll be doing a big thing if you help this kolkhoz to get ahead."

He went on to speak of the *Voroshilov* collective's prospects.

"You need to get some building done, and the faster, the better," he said. "But that means producing the materials. Will you be able to put up a brick and tile kiln this year?"

"We're starting already," Remenets called out.

"Another thing you ought to do this year is erect a power plant. After all, you're next to the Gorniy Tikich, just the same as the *Gains of October* is."

"We've already ordered a turbine," Remenets returned.

"And you need a bigger club. The quarters here are pretty cramped, aren't they?"

"We're going to build a House of Culture," came the answer.

I almost expected Remenets to jump up, pull off his coat and call:

"Come on, boys, get shovels, axes, planes! We're starting in!..."

It's a fine chairman the *Voroshilov* farm has got—determined, capable, well-informed. He nearly always has a book of some kind in his pocket. I have mentioned how he used to come to the *Gains of October* to see what he could "pick up" from us. And in the same way he tries to pick up something useful in every book he reads. It's books about collective farmers that he likes best. He reads them and tries to act like the kolkhoz chairmen in them, to work as they do.

Remenets has two grown-up children. His daughter is attending a college in Uman and his son, who was discharged from the army recently, is finishing the course at a secondary school for adults in Talnoye.

"I want my children to be educated, cultured people," Remenets says. "It's a shameful thing to neglect your children's education nowadays."

After the meeting at the club, Remenets asked me over to his house. The two of us have always been good friends, but we don't as a rule go in for intimacy and confidences. I suppose it's because we're both on the wrong side of 50, and a man isn't given to talking much when he gets to that age.

But this time, for joy at the great honour accorded him, no doubt, Ivan Artyomovich waxed quite eloquent. We discussed the future prospects of our emulation contest and told each other about our plans. And as I was leaving, he said, with a grin:

"You know, Fyodor, it's partly your doing that I've been nominated to the Supreme Soviet."

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, you brought me into the contest, and I didn't want to be worsted—and here I am now, a front-ranker. Socialist emulation is a tremendous force, there's no denying that."

"Yes, it certainly is."

With all my heart I wish Ivan Artyomovich fresh achievements and triumphs.

MARCHING TOWARDS THE MORNING

In the early years of our kolkhoz, our Kom-somols would often start the day with the song:

*We're marching towards the morning,
We're struggling, comrades all.*

In those days the morning of the new, socialist life was just dawning for our country.

It was with this same rousing youth song that I felt like starting 1951—only now, on the threshold of the second half of the century, the song called for new words. You wanted to say:

"We're marching towards the morning, towards communism."

For a couple of weeks we lived amid the visions and ideas that had been born around the New Year tree. Then we started translating them into figures, diagrams, charts. Finally they became a connected whole called: the new kolkhoz five-year plan.

Soon this plan, like the last, will be displayed for all to see. We shall write up the figures on a big bulletin board in the place of greatest prominence, so that all may know what we must fight for and what our kolkhoz will be like in 1955.

The plan has been drawn up year by year, with a steady expansion in all our different branches of farming. In framing it, we took into account various objective factors that will be arising, such as further price reductions.

I have the plan here before me. Let me start with crops, which are our principal branch. In money, it is true, they will account for only a quarter of our total income. But crops—grain and vegetables and fruit—are and remain the foundation for developing our other branches, and livestock raising for one. As Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchov has put it, every ton of maize means some 150 kilograms of pork.

Our land area, let me remind you, is 1,200 hectares. From this area we must in 1955 get an

income of 3,830,000 rubles, or 3,190 rubles per hectare.

The per hectare yields we plan are: 29 centners of grain (32 of winter wheat), 45 of maize, 350 of sugar beets, and 40 of fruit.

Without reducing the wheat and beet areas, we mean practically to double the area planted to perennial grasses. And that is understandable, for stock raising is our second most important branch. By the end of the five years, we intend it to be yielding a million and a half rubles annually.

How do we expect to achieve this?

When the five years are up, we mean to have 200 milch cows, or one for every six hectares of land. (We already have 113.) We're going to make them milk 4,000 litres a year—a total of 800,000 litres. Half of this will go for the deliveries, for milk sales to the state and for feeding the calves. The other 400,000 litres will be processed at our creamery. This will mean 190 centners of butter a year. And even if butter by that time costs no more than 15 rubles a kilogram, it will bring us 285,000 rubles—and there will be cheese as well.

The beef sales we plan for 1955 are 170 centners. Some of this meat will first be processed at our curing shop.

Well to the fore in our plan is pig raising. In 1950 we raised 115 pigs weighing 100-160 kilograms apiece. In 1955 we intend to raise

1,000—one thousand pigs, 300 of them weighing 170 kilograms! That will give us 680 centners of pork and 40 of pork fat, a good deal of which we shall turn into sausage.

There's another little item in this connection. Clearly, the way things are going, everybody in town will before very long be wanting to have not just ham or chops, but roast suckling pig too. And so we're planning to sell 300 piglets.

From our sheep we mean to get 10 centners of wool, 69 of meat and fat and 270 sheepskins, and from our geese, ducks, turkeys and chickens, 57,000 eggs, 30 centners of meat and a centner of down.

Now let me return to crops and outline our program in fruit and vegetable growing.

All our people set high store by the orchard—and well they might. Even last year, which was a poor year for fruit, it brought us a clear 192,000 rubles (counting sales of wine).

Up to now we have had 16 hectares under fruit, and this coming spring we shall start planting another 24. By way of preparation, we have developed a nursery of our own, where Makar Gotsik has grown saplings enough to cover 100 hectares. So there'll be plenty for the kolkhoz orchard and for the members' household plots, and some over for sale as well.

Our fish pond area will be increased in the five years from the present 15 hectares to 30.

A few words about vegetable growing. Proceeds from this are to be trebled under our new five-year plan, reaching 175,000 rubles. Up to the present we have had 40 frames, now we intend to build up the number to 80. In addition, we shall set up a forcing house, so as to have fresh vegetables in winter too.

We also expect a great deal of the irrigated truck garden that we are laying out above the Gorny Tikich. We've already bought a pump to drive the water up to it, and in the spring we shall start digging the irrigation canal and ditches.

Makar Gotsik, a great one for new departures, is thinking of growing rice by the Tikich too. When I asked him where he expected to get the seed, he laughed and said:

"I've got it already...."

Good returns will also come, as they have been coming, from our various auxiliary establishments: the power plant, the workshops, the oil press, the flour and hulling mills, the sawmill, etc. Some of these we shall expand, but as to the flour mill, we'll build a new one. For our members are demanding with one accord:

"Let's put up a wheat mill. Who wants to eat black bread?"

As a matter of fact, we eat next to no black bread now. As a rule we arrange to have our

wheat exchanged in bulk for wheaten flour. But why have this extra carting? And so we have taken the suggestion into account, and a wheat mill will be erected in 1953.

On this subject of building. I don't know about others, but as for myself, I can't be happy if I don't see construction scaffolding around me and hear the whine of saws and the ringing of axes. It's so good to see new homes or a new cow house or a new garage going up.

Besides the mill, we intend to put up a new general storehouse and a special one for vegetables, a new pigpen and stables, and other farm structures. The allocations for construction work will be increased year by year, and by 1955 they will reach 800,000 rubles.

I have said already that we are building a whole section of new houses. The next three or four years will see thirty of them go up. The new street will stretch to the copse, which we shall turn little by little into a park. And in this park, next to the pond, we shall put up an open-air theatre, and a little way off, a house for our youngsters. Let the kiddies live in the fresh air all summer with their teachers, with the parents just coming to visit them.

We have also decided to do something our women have long dreamed of: this spring we shall start work on a mechanical laundry and

shall rebuild the bakery that we had in the old commune days.

Such are our plans, plans of further progress towards communism.

HAIL TO THE MORROW!

One evening last summer I was sitting on my porch. It was still and quiet and one felt like daydreaming. I thought of Gogol's description of night in the Ukraine.

"Do you know what night is like in the Ukraine? Oh, you do not know the night of the Ukraine! Peer into it. . . ."

I peered. The moon was shining. The voices of girls singing came floating from the garden.

But now bright electric stars sprang to life on the kolkhoz buildings, in the street, over the whole community, and the moon overhead seemed to pale.

The girls' voices too no longer held the field unchallenged: music came over the radio, and you could hear the band playing in the club.

Footsteps sounded in the street. Was it Gogol's drunken Kalenik looking for his house? . . . From behind the trees, a young man appeared.

"Can I speak to you, Fyodor Ivanovich?"

It was our smith, Trofim Lisovoy. He was installing the cableway in the pigpen, and I thought

there was some hitch and he wanted advice. But no, he had come with a rationalization suggestion.

"Don't you think we could make the other cableway ourselves, Fyodor Ivanovich, instead of buying it? It's a simple enough affair, I imagine you could make one like it with the equipment in our workshops...."

Three lorries came rolling down the street. Two of them were hauling timber from the railway; the third stopped in front of my house, and the driver, Ivan Kovalchuk, got out and called:

"Here are the electric milkers!"

Old and young flocked to the lorry. Everybody wanted to see the new milkers. What were they like?

No sooner had Kovalchuk driven off than a motorcyclist sped down the street, and another followed.

"Pushkin would hardly say 'Still is the Ukrainian night' nowadays," I thought to myself.

Talking about motorcycles, Nikolai Zholomko has one, so have power-station manager Boris Skibitsky, electrician Dmitri Lisovoy, garage manager Yukhim Tkachuk, and many other of our people. That's today, with the workday unit bringing in 5 rubles in cash. And what will it be like in 1955, when the unit will be worth all of 12 rubles? Both the village and the people whom we

still call peasants will have changed beyond recognition.

What did the peasant think about in the old days? About his bit of land, about a horse, a plough, a harrow, and least of all about the house he lived in and the clothes he wore; as to any household acquisition, that he hardly thought of at all. He slept on bare boards, ate from an earthenware bowl and did not have even the most primitive of washing fixtures.

As for Ivan Kovalchuk, whom I mentioned above, he did not even have an eating bowl, let alone a house. The kolkhoz took in this orphan boy, raised him up, educated him and set him on his feet.

Now he has built himself a house with our help—a fine house of three rooms and kitchen with an “eternite” roof and big windows.

And many of our members are putting up houses like that. The collective farmer does not have to worry about a horse or a plough. He thinks about having attractive furniture in his home, about buying a gramophone and radio, about good clothes for his children and a bicycle or motorcycle for himself.

Stepping over to see someone of an evening, you find his home well-kept and cosy, with electric lighting and with music coming from the radio. Your host will very likely be reading, and if

there's ironing to do, you'll see his wife using an electric iron.

It's 28 years now that I've been chairman of the kolkhoz, and sometimes I hardly notice myself the tremendous changes that have taken place in this time. But when you stop and look back, you can't help marvelling: people who used to be an illiterate, benighted lot of muzhiks, some of them terrified even of a railway engine, have mastered machinery, scientific farming methods and pretty well anything else you care to name.

Take Trofim Lisovoy: no sooner had he seen a factory-made cableway than he decided to make one like it on the spot.

Or Makar Gotsik: the day after he'd read in the papers about the Dnieper canal scheme for watering the steppelands, he came running to me, saying:

"We ought to make a canal too and use the water from the Tikich. . . ."

Such are the men fledged by the October Revolution and reared by the Party of Lenin and Stalin. That is the kind of stuff they are made of. They have learnt to transform the loftiest vision into an actuality. They are pressing on and on to an even happier morrow.

Tomorrow, hail! You are bringing us new joys, new desires, new plans.

I stand on the slope above the Gorny Tikich and seem to see to the uttermost ends of my be-

loved Homeland. Everywhere there is the scaffolding of new construction. On the Volga, the Dnieper, the Don, giant power plants are going up. In Moscow, Kiev, Sverdlovsk and in remote Kamchatka new factories and huge buildings are being erected. In the steppelands and deserts, canals are being dug.

A joy and pride beyond telling wells up within me. It is only in our land that such miraculous transformations are possible. Only in our land, which is led by the Communist Party and guided by the genius of Stalin.

The morrow of our life is an inspiration not only to us, but to all of progressive humanity. Our example is already being followed by the peoples of the New Democracies in West and East.

People come to us to learn the art of husbandry. We go abroad as bringers of the most advanced *techniques* in the world.

Such are the summits of honour and glory to which we have attained.

Our route was charted by the immortal Lenin. And our great Stalin brought us out on the high-road and leads us ever onward.

